

**PEACE IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT:
THE TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE UNITED STATES, TAIWAN, AND CHINA**

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Abstract

The status quo “peace” in the Taiwan Strait has been maintained primarily through the U.S. policy of *deterrence and assurance*. Should war occur between the U.S. and China over Taiwan, the consequences would be disastrous. The maintenance of peace and security in the Taiwan Strait, therefore, is of great importance for all the interested parties and beyond. The U.S. policy of *deterrence and assurance* has operated to maintain the status quo “peace” by deterring China from engaging in unprovoked attacks on Taiwan while assuring China that the U.S. would not support Taiwan’s official independence.

However, the status quo maintaining the “peace” in the Taiwan Strait is shifting due to three major factors below:

- (1) China’s increasingly aggressive stance in the Taiwan Strait since the mid-2010s, grounded upon its “One China Principle” and increased economic and military capabilities to take Taiwan by force;
- (2) Taiwan’s growing sense of self-identity may lead to a movement paving the way for its eventual official independence;
- (3) The longstanding adherence of the U.S. to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait has been undergoing gradual shifts mainly as a reaction and in response to the two factors outlined above.

To maintain the status quo “peace,” the U.S. must adjust its outdated engagement policy toward China to a *stronger deterrence* policy in the Taiwan Strait, to deter China more effectively. The U.S. must also adopt a *firmer assurance* policy, to assure China that Taiwan is not considering proclaiming official independence. At the same time, the U.S. must recognize Taiwan’s growing sense of identity and provide critical military, economic, and political support to ensure Taiwan’s success as an alternative model of development and a winning narrative toward China.

The status quo “peace” in the Taiwan Strait is valuable but fragile. It is not a true and enduring peace, which should be the ultimate objective for all parties involved. A compromise between China’s nationalism based on the “One China Policy” and Taiwan’s growing self-identity is likely a prerequisite for any type of long-lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait. In its absence, a true long-lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait is likely to remain elusive.

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leading experts on this important and complex topic of peace in the Taiwan Strait. However, the analysis and conclusions of the paper are my responsibility alone.

Table of Contents

Abstract	(P. ii)
Acknowledgements	(P. iv)
Chapter I: Introduction: The Status Quo in the Taiwan Strait	(P. 1)
Chapter II: How Has “Peace” Been Maintained in the Taiwan Strait and How Is It Shifting?	
1. The Status Quo “Peace” in the Taiwan Strait	(P. 13)
2. China’s Aggressive Stance	
A. China’s Ideology and Ambitions	(P. 18)
B. Why Has China Sought to Alter the Status Quo?	(P. 24)
C. China’s Taiwan Policy in Practice	(P. 32)
3. Taiwan’s Growing Self-Identity	
A. What is a Taiwanese Identity and What May It Lead To?	(P. 39)
B. Taiwan’s China Policy Since 2016	(P. 43)
C. Taiwan’s China Policy in the Future	(P. 45)
4. The U.S.’s Evolving Policy	
A. Why Can’t the U.S. Simply Give up on Taiwan and Not Get Involved?	(P. 57)
B. The U.S. Policy Toward China	(P. 61)
C. The U.S. Policy Toward Taiwan Since the 1980s	(P. 79)
Chapter III: The Theory of “Strategic Triangle”, Key Findings of Survey of Experts, and Policy Recommendations for the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait	
1. The Theory of “Strategic Triangle,” Explaining the Triangular Relationship Among the U.S., Taiwan, and China	(P. 85)
2. Key Findings of Survey of Experts	(P. 87)
3. Policy Recommendations for the U.S.	(P. 89)
Chapter IV: Conclusion: A New Status Quo “Peace” & A Long-Lasting Peace	(P. 101)

Appendix I:	The Research Plan	
1.	Primary Sources	(P. 103)
2.	Secondary Sources	(P. 104)
3.	Survey Questions and Responses	(P. 113)
Appendix II:	Abbreviations	(P. 135)
Appendix III:	The United States: Joint Statement Following Discussions with Leaders of the People's Republic of China (Commonly known as the Shanghai Communiqué), Shanghai, February 27, 1972 (Selected Sections)	(P. 136)
Appendix IV:	The United States: Taiwan Relations Act, January 1, 1979 (Selected Sections)	(P. 137)
Appendix V:	China: Working Together to Realize Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation and Advance China's Peaceful Reunification, Speech at the Meeting Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Issuance of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, January 2, 2019, Xi Jinping (Selected Sections)	(P. 139)
Appendix VI:	Taiwan: President Tsai issues statement on China's President Xi's "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan" January 2, 2019	(P. 141)

Chapter I: Introduction

This study examines peace in the Taiwan Strait. Some have opined that a war between the People's Republic of China and the U.S. is inevitable or highly likely.¹ If this war were to occur between the two superpowers, it would most likely be over Taiwan.² Considering the devastating aftermath of this scenario, it is in the world's best interest to maintain the peace in the Taiwan Strait.³ This precarious political landscape has prompted the need for this study. It is hoped that this examination will help readers understand the complex and difficult situations surrounding the Taiwan Strait and propose policy recommendations designed to maintain the peace. The readers of this study are likely to be international relations policymakers and scholars, or general readers interested in the U.S.-Taiwan-China affairs. This study avoids difficult jargon, and every technical term and concept is explained. Even those without background knowledge in international relations should find the study helpful.

Following *Abstract* and *Acknowledgements*, this study begins with *Chapter I: Introduction*, which explains the status quo in the region from each party's subjective view among China, Taiwan, and the U.S. *Chapter II: How Has "Peace" Been Maintained and How Is It Shifting?* attempts to answer what the "peace" may mean in the Taiwan Strait. How has this status quo "peace" been maintained, and how is that status quo "peace" shifting? This Chapter also

¹ See a discussion in Allison, Graham, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017. Also, Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, Penguin Random House, 1998.

² Other than Taiwan, the South China Sea is widely considered as another flash point between China and the United States.

³ The horror of a war between the two nuclear armed superpowers is almost unthinkable. It would be a tragedy because the war is unnecessary and preventable.

discusses in depth the pressing concerns and policies developed over the years to the present among the three major parties involved.

Chapter III: The Theory, Key Findings of Survey of Experts, and Policy Recommendations for the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait explores this triangular relationship based on an existing “strategic triangle” international relations theory. This Chapter also lists key findings that the author has distilled from a survey of some of the world’s top experts on the Taiwan Strait, and offers three key policy recommendations for the U.S. Finally, *Chapter IV: Conclusion: A New Status Quo “Peace” & A Long Lasting Peace* concludes the study with a summary.

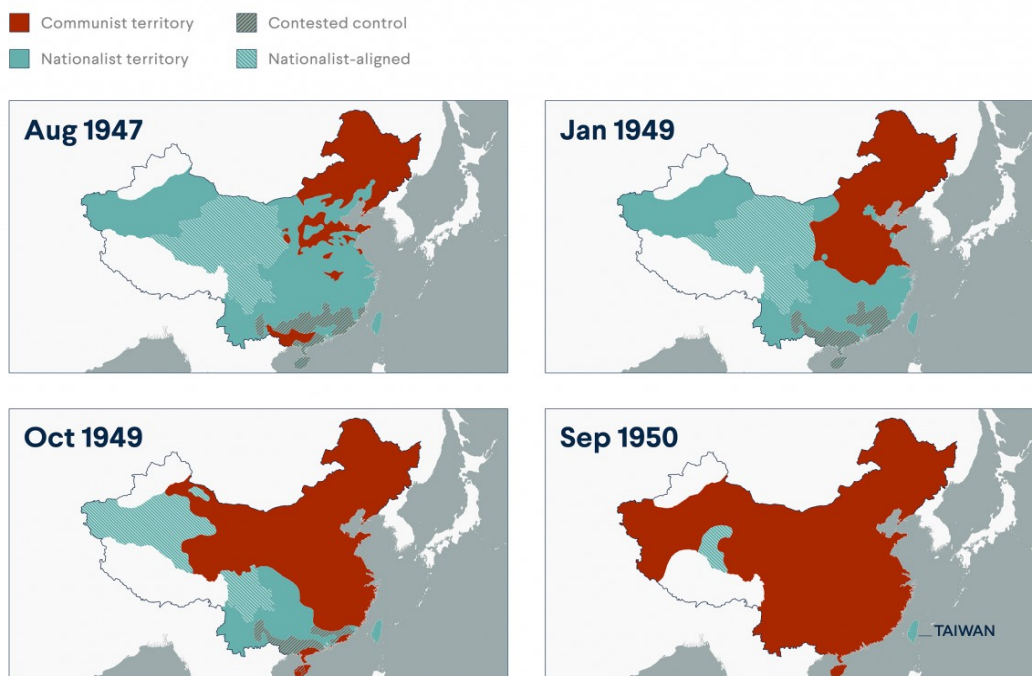
There has not been a major military conflict in the Taiwan Strait since the Chinese Communist forces defeated the Chinese Nationalist forces in the Chinese Civil War in 1949.⁴ The Chinese Communist forces, supported by the Soviet Union, then founded the People’s Republic of China in 1949 with Beijing as its capital. While the Communist victory was decisive in Mainland China, it was incomplete because the defeated Nationalist government, supported by the U.S., and the remaining Nationalist forces and followers fled Mainland China. They, over a million in total, crossed the 180-kilometer (110 mile)-wide Taiwan Strait to the island of Taiwan.⁵ With its capital in Taipei in Taiwan, they hoped to return to Mainland China and launch a counter-attack against the Communists in the future.

⁴ Around 1950, the Chinese Communists were preparing to launch an amphibious invasion of Taiwan, but that plan was aborted by the Korean War. On two separate occasions during the 1950s, China bombed strategic islands controlled by Taiwan. The United States responded by actively intervening on behalf of Taiwan. See “The Taiwan Straits Crisis: 1954–55 and 1958”, Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

⁵ “The Taiwan Strait has an average width of 110 miles, while its narrow part is 81 miles wide. The Taiwan Strait sits on a continental shelf that runs along the entire stretch of the strait. The strait is relatively shallow...” Kiprof, Joseph, “Where Is the Taiwan Strait Located?”, *WorldAtlas*, May 14, 2018. <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/where-is-the-taiwan-strait-located.html#:~:text=The%20Taiwan%20Strait%20has%20an,entire%20stretch%20of%20the%20strait.>

The Nationalists, after arriving in Taiwan around 1949, now joined the early settlers, who totaled over six million ethnic Chinese who had already settled in Taiwan for generations and a smaller group of non-Chinese aborigines who had settled in Taiwan even earlier. This larger group of people in Taiwan, whose ancestors had started to move from China to Taiwan in waves since the 17th century and a smaller group of aborigines, found themselves in the midst of the messy and unfinished Chinese Civil War continuing to this day.⁶

Chinese Communists Win Civil War after WWII



Source: Omniatlas.

World101
From the Council on Foreign Relations

https://world101.cfr.org/sites/default/files/styles/fluid_1200/public/images/photo/2019/12/h3-chinese-civil-war.png?itok=a2keWL8P

⁶ Regarding the often-overlooked aborigines' perspective on the status and future of Taiwan, see "Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan to President Xi Jinping of China, Joint Declaration by the Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan within the Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee", January 9, 2019.

《原轉會各民族代表：台灣原住民族致中國習近平主席》
<https://international.thenewslens.com/article/111667>

Major military conflicts between the Communists and the Nationalists mostly ended in 1949, but the bitter Chinese Civil War has not officially ended. This “peace” among China, Taiwan, and the U.S. since 1949 in the Taiwan Strait has been maintained delicately mostly through the U.S. policy of *deterrence and assurance*.^{7 8 9} By way of this policy, the U.S. has largely deterred China from attacking Taiwan unprovoked while assuring China that it would not support Taiwan’s official independence. While the U.S. policy has not resolved the underlying conflict between China and Taiwan, it has kept, at a minimum, the “peace” in the Taiwan Strait since 1949.

However, this “peace” has been challenged since the mid-2010s due primarily to Chinese leadership’s aggressive stance, equipped with rapidly developing economic and military capabilities, on the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, a growing sense of Taiwanese identity separate from China that may pave the way for a call for official independence has been a notable development impacting the “peace”. China has indicated its willingness to resort to force in the event that Taiwan proclaims its official independence, because Chinese leadership has always considered Taiwan a part of China. While Taiwan’s de facto ally, the U.S., has sought to calibrate policy regarding the Taiwan Strait, the precarious circumstances surrounding this region, if not managed delicately, could trigger a direct confrontation between the U.S. and China. The fundamental question then surfaces: What can be done to maintain this temporary “peace” for

⁷ “Peace” here simply means the absence of war.

⁸ Ross, Robert S, “Stability of Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait”: *The National Interest*, Fall 2001.

⁹ Christensen, Thomas, “The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict” *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002. Other scholars have used the phrase “dual deterrence” to explain the same policy.

the foreseeable future and to pursue a long-term peace in the Taiwan Strait in the distant future?¹⁰

1. The Objective Status Quo

Objectively speaking, the status quo on the Taiwan Strait has been an uneasy, and yet mostly “peaceful” stalemate between the two governments on both sides. The authoritarian and nationalistic government to the west of the Taiwan Strait governs the continent-size country of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) that is recognized by an overwhelming number of countries in the world to represent China. The government to the east of the Taiwan Strait has evolved from an authoritarian dictatorship to a liberal democracy, and it governs the island of Taiwan and a few surrounding smaller islands with its official name as the Republic of China (ROC), a country that is recognized by only a handful of small countries in the world.¹¹ It has insisted that the ROC has always been sovereign and is not subordinate to the PRC. The ROC, however, cannot proclaim its official independence as a country of “Taiwan” without risking a war with the PRC, which considers this a defiant act to break away from China.

The separation of the two governments by the Taiwan Strait is the result of a Chinese Civil War that had been essentially suspended since 1949 but never officially concluded to this day. The U.S. had been supporting the ROC government both before its defeat in Mainland China and

¹⁰ In this study, a long-lasting peace is defined as “a state or period of mutual concord between governments” or “a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity”. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/peace>.

¹¹ In 2021, only 15 countries in the world recognize Taiwan as a country.

after its fleeing to Taiwan in 1949.¹² After transforming into a true liberal democracy since the 1980s, Taiwan began sharing with the U.S. values of freedom and democracy. The U.S., however, had established official diplomatic relationships and recognized the PRC government in Mainland China (the de facto government governing Mainland China since 1949) and derecognized the ROC government in Taiwan in 1979.

The U.S. recognition of the PRC was largely a result of the PRC-Soviet Union split and the need of the U.S. to withdraw itself from Vietnam with the PRC's assistance. Despite the U.S.'s formal diplomatic relationship with the PRC, the U.S. has maintained a strong informal de facto relationship with the ROC government in Taiwan.¹³¹⁴ The U.S. periodically sells arms to Taiwan to support its defensive capabilities to counter China, which arguably works to preserve the "peace" by preventing military conflicts through deterrence of China from invading Taiwan. At the same time, the U.S. has assured China that it would not support Taiwan's official independence. The result has been an uneasy, but mostly "peaceful" stalemate between China and Taiwan since 1949, largely dictated by the balancing act by the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait.

In reality, this objective status quo in the Taiwan Strait does not fully satisfy any of the parties involved, namely China, the U.S., and Taiwan itself. Despite this, all three parties have

¹² The U.S., disillusioned with its involvement in the Chinese civil war, suspended its support for the Chinese Nationalist government briefly in 1949 but quickly resumed the support after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

¹³ To avoid confusion and for the purpose of clarification, the PRC will be referred to as China and the ROC will be referred to as Taiwan in this study. Some in the PRC may object to this clarification since it implies Taiwan is not part of China. Some in the ROC may also object since they think Taiwan should be addressed with its official name ROC or at least ROC Taiwan. This possible objection is a clear indication of the complexity of the issue, starting with how various sides consider what the proper terminology should be.

¹⁴ The U.S.'s recognition of the PRC government in China and derecognition of the ROC government in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China in 1979 created a crisis about Taiwan's future immediately. In response to this crisis, the U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Acts (TRA) and it was signed into law in 1979. The three joint U.S.-China Communiqués were issued in 1972, 1979, and 1982, and supplemented by the Six Assurances in 1982.

had to accept this reality since 1949. China has been particularly reluctant to accept this status quo because it considers its unification of China incomplete in the absence of Taiwan. The objective status quo in the Taiwan Strait is not ideal and tensions remain, but all three sides have been unable (i.e., China at least until very recently and Taiwan) or unwilling (i.e., the U.S.) to alter the status quo. Nevertheless, the status quo is never static and constantly changing, and it is the premise of this study that this status quo has been shifting fundamentally since the mid-2010s. As a result of this shift, the so-called “peace” in the Taiwan Straits is being threatened in a fundamental way.

2. Subjective Status Quo

The objective status quo, or the contours of the Taiwan Strait (i.e., the two governments on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait), is relatively clear. The subjective status quo, however, is quite the opposite. The status quo is hotly contested subjectively, and there is considerable controversy over it. The parties involved, namely China, Taiwan, and the U.S. have advanced different and sometimes contradictory interpretations of the situation based on their own viewpoints. For example, just within Taiwan itself, opposing camps have very different interpretations of some of the very basic political and social features of Taiwan. For instance, some groups identify themselves as Taiwanese while others identify themselves as Chinese or Chinese/Taiwanese.

In fact, the situation in the Taiwan Strait reflects a “Rashomon effect,” a term derived from a 1950 Japanese classic film *Rashomon* describing a controversial situation (in the film, it referred to a criminal act) that is given contradictory interpretations by the various parties

involved. The term refers to contested interpretations of or disagreements over a particular situation, and subjectivity versus objectivity in human perception. As in the film, each party sees and describes the situation from one's own perspective, which is often self-serving, incomplete, or biased. Therefore, it is critical to understand the perception and perspective of each party involved, (in our case, whether it's China's, Taiwan's, and the U.S.'s) to understand the complex and ambiguous situation before one can even explore possible solutions. We will review each party's view in turn.

- China's View

First, Chinese leadership has not been familiar with or accepted the concept of status quo from the outset, and it rarely uses the term in its policies toward Taiwan. Chinese leaders prefer the terminology of "preserving the peace," rather than the status quo, in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁵ Second, Chinese leadership has long been unwilling to accept the objective reality of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait because that reality is a China without Taiwan, which is, in their view, an incomplete China. The objective reality in which the two governments occupy each side of the Taiwan Strait undermines Chinese leadership's legitimacy and violates its subjective view of the status quo as expressed its political doctrine of "One China Principle." It provides that Taiwan is a part of China and that China has sovereignty over Taiwan, and this view has always characterized China's definition of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁶

¹⁵ Lin, Cheng-yi and Denny Roy (Editors), *The Future of United States, China, and Taiwan Relations*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2011. P. 77.

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/b833/01d9a583ad099d94e074cc5b6db15bc7ed47.pdf>

¹⁶ Ibid., 77 to 78.

As the victors of the bitter Chinese Civil War that suspended in 1949, the Communist Chinese leaders long considered that China had been deprived of the prize of Taiwan but for the U.S. intervention.¹⁷ The inability to unify Taiwan, in their view, undermined their own legitimacy and authority to rule China. Though highly dissatisfied, China found itself unable to alter the objective status quo and had little choice but to accept it. Chinese leadership, however, has long taught Chinese citizens that Taiwan is a province of China, and that it is inevitable Taiwan will be unified by the “motherland” someday. Since the mid-2010s, China has been accelerating its military capabilities to take Taiwan by force, thereby altering the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait. While China has taken an increasingly aggressive and militaristic stance, it remains uncertain whether this will serve as a realistic option for Chinese leadership. In other words, launching a full-scale military campaign will be an extremely risky endeavor entailing dire consequences and costs. Despite this apparent cost-benefit analysis, Chinese leadership has nevertheless decided to adopt an aggressive posture in the Taiwan Strait since the mid-2010s to alter the long-standing status quo.

- Taiwan’s View

For Taiwanese, the status quo means Taiwan is neither a part of the PRC nor an independent sovereign state called Taiwan.¹⁸ Most Taiwanese seem to fall into two broad groups

¹⁷ The TRA and the Six Assurances are the Chinese government’s most discussed “betrayal” by the U.S. To Taiwan, the U.S.’s recognition of the PRC government in China and derecognition of the ROC government in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China in 1979 made the U.S. like an unreliable ally Taiwan could no longer count on. It is a historical legacy that the PRC and the ROC governments both feel betrayed by the U.S.

¹⁸ Neither part of the PRC or an independent country called Taiwan a reality as of 2021. However, many in China would like Taiwan to be a part of the PRC, and some in Taiwan would like to establish an independent country called Taiwan someday.

when it comes to understanding the status quo. The first group is generally more “Taiwan-centric,” sees Taiwan as a de facto independent country, and identifies themselves as Chinese/Taiwanese or, increasingly, solely Taiwanese. Some in this group are willing to accept this uncertain status quo for as long as it lasts, some favoring official independence, but they all support the separation from the PRC. As Taiwanese identity continues to grow in Taiwan, the first “Taiwan centric” group has been gaining traction, particularly among the younger generations. The second group is generally more “ROC-centric” (“Republic of China” as Taiwan is officially known), which considers Taiwan a part of the ROC and tends to identify themselves as solely Chinese. Although some in this group support unification with the PRC in the distant future, they collectively oppose Taiwan’s official independence and support Taiwan’s current status as part of China (i.e., ROC). For both groups, there seems to be a general consensus under a big tent of “maintaining the status quo,” at least for now. Some within this tent do favor Taiwan’s official independence in the distant future, and their numbers have been growing notably since 2018. Those who favor Taiwan’s swift official independence outside of the big tent of “maintaining the status quo” have also seen a modest growth since 2018.

For Taiwan, the objective status quo is not ideal because it does not allow Taiwan to fully function as an independent country. The ROC, as Taiwan is officially known, is only recognized by a handful of small countries in the world. Most countries in the world, under pressure or coercion from China to choose between China or Taiwan, naturally choose China, a country with a population size of 1.4 billion and an enormous economic market over the small island of Taiwan with a population size of 24 million. As a result, Taiwan has been isolated on the international stage as it has not been able to join most international organizations because it is not considered

by many as a “country.” At the same time, Taiwan cannot proclaim its official independence as “Taiwan” without taking seemingly unreasonable risks of both losing U.S. support and provoking China. As such, Taiwan has been grappling with this dilemma for decades, but it still has managed to grow and succeed as a thriving liberal democracy. Nevertheless, few in Taiwan are fully satisfied with the objective status quo though most Taiwanese have learned to live with this less-than-ideal reality. Most Taiwanese have supported the status quo because they consider it the best possible realistic situation under the circumstances. This general acceptance, however, does not indicate that they will readily sacrifice the values they have fought for, including peace, prosperity, democracy, and the ability to charter their own destiny.

- The U.S.’s View

The U.S. was not able to assist the Chinese Nationalists to prevent the Chinese Communists from winning the Chinese Civil War and taking over Mainland China in 1949. However, the U.S. succeeded in stopping the Communists from overrunning Taiwan. Initially reluctant to intervene in the Taiwan Strait after its bitter experience in the Chinese Civil War, the U.S. deployed its 7th Fleet in 1950 to protect Taiwan following the outbreak of the Korean War to keep the Communist forces from crossing the Taiwan Strait. Although the underlying conflicts and the tensions between China and Taiwan remain, this uneasy status quo has kept the “peace” from both sides and prevented further escalation, which would likely have drafted the U.S. into yet another unwanted war.

The U.S. has accepted this objective reality of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, which has sustained the “peace” since 1950. From the U.S. perspective, it has been in each party’s best

interest to maintain a delicate equilibrium, which has allowed both Taiwan and China to grow and prosper. The U.S. has always strongly opposed any unilateral changes of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait by either China or Taiwan. Having played a critical role from the outset in this conflict, the U.S. has changed its position several times regarding Taiwan's legal status.¹⁹ While the U.S. has continued to provide Taiwan with critical support by way of frequent arms sales and other important political and economic assistance, the U.S. has strongly discouraged Taiwan from taking any decisive measures toward proclaiming official independence.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 81 to 83.

²⁰ Ibid., 84 to 85. Taiwan came dangerously close, from the U.S.'s perspective, to moving toward formal independence during Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's administration from 2000 to 2008.

Chapter II: How Has “Peace” Been Maintained in the Taiwan Strait and How Is It Shifting?

1. The Status Quo “Peace” in the Taiwan Strait

None of the parties involved—China, Taiwan, and the U.S.—is entirely content with the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, though China is the least receptive while the U.S. is likely the most receptive party to the current landscape, with Taiwan in between. In practice, this objective status quo has offered “peace” for all three parties for over seventy years. What does this delicately maintained “peace” mean? It simply means the absence of war in the Taiwan Strait. More precisely, the “peace” here means the absence of a major military conflict in the Taiwan Strait irrespective of how fragile or precarious it may seem.

This “peace” has been delicately maintained primarily through the U.S. policy of “strategic ambiguity” adopted during the early 1980s.²¹ The ambiguity lies in the intentionally vague commitment of the U.S. to provide military defense of Taiwan against China. The policy is intentionally ambiguous because it delicately maintains the balance between China and Taiwan while maintaining the U.S. interest in preserving the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

“Strategic ambiguity” is an apt phrase. In the words of Thomas Christensen, a political scientist and former U.S. Department of State official, *deterrence and assurance* (or *double deterrence* as coined by other experts) has also described this characteristic of U.S. policy towards

²¹ The U.S. and Taiwan had a mutual defense treaty which expired on Jan 1, 1980 so the U.S. Taiwan Strait policy was clear and unambiguous before then. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-united-states-and-taiwans-defense-transformation/>

However, Nancy Tucker traces the origins of strategic ambiguity to the mid-1950s. “It is clear that the 1954-55 Taiwan Strait crisis had three fundamental, long-term effects on U.S.-Taiwan-China interaction...Washington’s difficulties controlling its ally and deterring its adversary produced the enduring if sometimes reviled, policy of strategic ambiguity.” See Nancy Tucker, *Strait Talk: US-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China*, Harvard University Press, 2009, P.14.

Taiwan.²²²³ This term indicates that the U.S. has *deterred* China not to attack Taiwan unprovoked, but also *assured* China that it would not support Taiwan's official independence. Taiwan is deterred from declaring official independence, avoiding a possible invasion from China which would unnecessarily draw the U.S. into an unwanted conflict in the Taiwan Strait. The U.S. is dissuaded from altering the status quo that allows it to deal with China on a wide range of other important issues elsewhere.²⁴ In fact, there is a "firm triangle of military deterrence and political dissuasion at work" among the three parties involved.²⁵ Through this deterrence and assurance, the status quo "peace" has been delicately maintained.²⁶

The ways in which this *deterrence and assurance* has helped maintain the status quo "peace" and benefit the three parties involved have been multifold. Since 1949, China, though it never abandoned its quest for the unification of Taiwan, has experienced dramatic domestic upheavals, emerging as a superpower in the early 21st century, at times challenging U.S. hegemony. Taiwan, enjoying protection from the U.S. and the status quo "peace," has been able to focus on its economic and social developments, growing into a sizable economic power and a vibrant democracy. The U.S., following a decisive victory at the end of World War II, emerged as the undisputed superpower and the world's hegemon well into the 21st century, without being drawn into a major military conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Since 1949, crises in the Taiwan Strait

²² In this study, I use Thomas Christensen's words "deterrence and assurance" to describe the policy for it is a more precise description than "strategic ambiguity".

²³ Some experts call this policy "double deterrence" but the concept it describes is essentially the same.

²⁴ Issues such as international terrorism and environmental issues.

²⁵ Ross, Robert S., "Stability of Deterrence in the Taiwan Strait": *The National Interest*, Fall 2001, P. 69.

²⁶ Chang, Cordon H and He Di, "The Absence of War in the US-China Confrontation over Quemoy and Matsu in 1954-1955: Contingency, Luck, Deterrence?" *American Historical Review*, vol.98 no 5 (December 1993) pp 1500-1524.

have been largely averted by all three parties coordinating with one another in maintaining the status quo “peace.”²⁷

Another contributing factor that helped maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait was the relative slow pace of China’s weapon modernization until the mid-1990s. However, since around 1996, with a rapid weapon modernization program, the Chinese military forces became emboldened to challenge the U.S. forces in the Taiwan Strait. This change in the balance of military power in the Taiwan Strait in China’s favor has enabled Chinese leadership to take a far more aggressive stance and shift and challenge the status quo. China has always been willing, and militarily greatly increasing its capabilities to take Taiwan by force.²⁸ For two decades from around 1996 to 2015, China’s military capabilities in the Taiwan Strait made significant and startling progress.²⁹ On the other hand, the U.S. military capabilities to defend Taiwan continued to erode during the same period. The U.S. has moved from “a situation in which it could dominate a Taiwan conflict in virtually all respects in 1996 to one in which it could be severely tested in a number of areas.”³⁰ While these changing conditions do not spell an unchallenged invasion of Taiwan by China, they nevertheless offer Chinese leadership the confidence to pursue a highly aggressive stance in the Taiwan Strait.

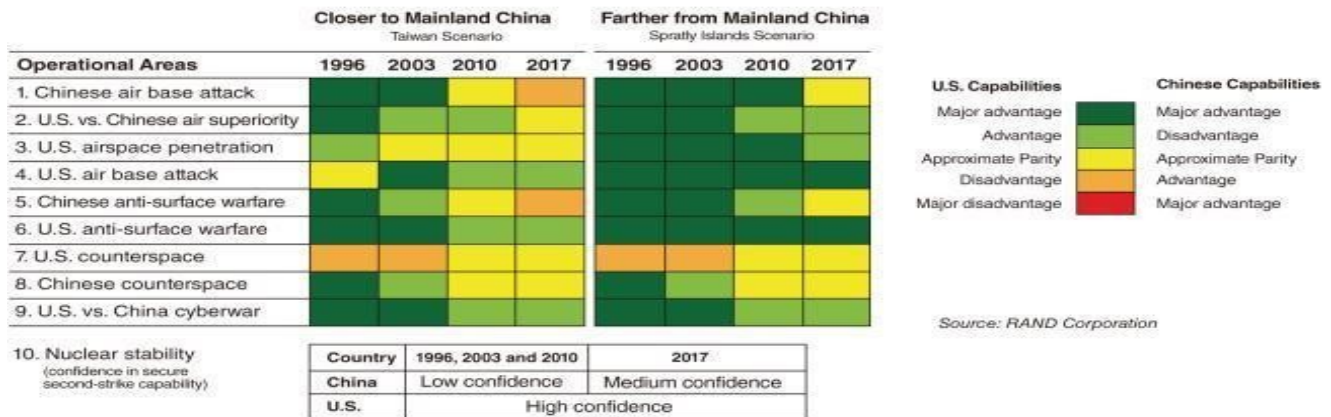
²⁷ Chase, Michael, “Averting a Cross-Strait Crisis” *Contingency Planning Memorandum No. 34*, February 26, 2019.

²⁸ Many experts estimate that China has greatly increased these military capabilities to invade Taiwan based on the Chinese military hardware, personnel, and rapidly growing budget. However, invading Taiwan involves a huge and complicated military operation so some experts have doubts about whether the invasion can be successful due to: (1) the Chinese forces’ experience and overall coordination, (2) the Taiwanese forces’ ability to defend, and (3) how quickly the U.S. forces can aid the Taiwanese forces. Also, even if the invasion is successful, whether the Chinese forces can successfully occupy Taiwan is another issue.

²⁹ “Tallying the U.S.-China Military Scorecard, Relative Capabilities and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996–2017” Rand Research Brief, 2015. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9858z1.html

³⁰ Ibid, 332.

U.S.-China military scorecard



The figure presents the results for each scorecard. The first nine scorecards employ a five-color stoplight approach to depict varying degrees of Chinese or U.S. advantage or a heavily contested environment defined by approximate parity. Advantage, in this context, means that one side is able to achieve its primary objectives in an operationally relevant amount of time, estimated in these scenarios as a period of weeks. For the nuclear scorecard, the results indicate the degree of confidence that each side could reasonably expect to have in the survivability of its second-strike strategic nuclear capability. Because survivability does not necessarily correlate with advantage, no color-coding is used for this scorecard.

NOTES: To prevail in either Taiwan or the Spratly Islands, China's offensive goals would require it to hold advantages in nearly all operational categories simultaneously. U.S. defensive goals could be achieved by holding the advantage in only a few areas. Nevertheless, China's improved performance could raise costs, lengthen the conflict, and increase risks to the United States.

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9858z1.html³¹

The status quo in the Taiwan Strait has been shifting fundamentally since the mid-2010s due to the shifts in three major underlying conditions. First, a major factor for this fundamental shift is China's new aggressive stance toward Taiwan.³² In addition to China's rapid weapon modernization program described above since the mid-1990s, the Chinese leadership has adopted a highly nationalistic stance in the Taiwan Strait based on its "One China Principle" since the mid-2010s. The most provocative military action initiated by China thus far has been the deployment of numerous warplanes near or circling Taiwan.

³¹ In this chart and immediately under the heading **Chinese Capabilities** to the far right of the chart (next to the dark green box), "Major advantage" should have been "Major disadvantage". The "dis" is missing on the Chinese side of the color explanation.

³² Almost all experts in Taiwan and the U.S. surveyed agree that China's aggressive stance is the most important reason causing the shifting of the status quo. However, a few experts in Taiwan and the U.S. and likely many in China consider Tsai's non-commitment of the "One China" framework to be the most important reason.

Second, Taiwan's growing self-identity may pave the way for a strong movement and impetus for declaring Taiwan's official independence in the future. Although Taiwan's official independence is far from certain and the ultimate red line for China, even a growing degree of Taiwanese identity is seen by China as a challenge to its authority and therefore as something that must be contained. This home-grown identity in Taiwan has been growing steadily, which has also played an important role and an important factor in shifting the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

Third, the U.S.' long standing adherence to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait is evolving and another important factor in shifting the status quo there. Partly in response to China's aggressive stance and Taiwan's growing self-identity, the U.S. foreign policy circles are shifting toward stronger support for Taiwan. The majority of U.S. policy makers and scholars still support maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait by following "strategic ambiguity" entailing deterrence and assurance, but many disagree on the types and the extent of what an effective deterrence mechanism would require. Many have called for a much tougher stand against China by significantly strengthening the de facto U.S.-Taiwan alliance, though the U.S. is still likely to continue to adjust its position within its "One China Policy" framework. Some have openly called for conferring Taiwan official diplomatic recognition, though this approach is unlikely to materialize in the near future.³³ The next step is to examine closely the respective history and policy of the three major parties surrounding the Taiwan Strait of.

³³ Everington, Keoni, "John Bolton Calls on US to Give Diplomatic Recognition to Taiwan", Taiwan News, April 16, 2020. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3917236>

2. China

A. China's Ideology and Ambitions

First, a major factor for the fundamental shift of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait is China's new aggressive stance there, which is based on Chinese leadership's highly *authoritarian and nationalistic* ideology, mainly its "One China Principle". Chinese leadership, particularly after Xi Jinping took power in 2012, has been promoting this ideology as an alternative to that of liberal democracy and free-market economy of the U.S. Overall, this Chinese leadership has aggressively pursued a strategy of "dramatic centralization of authority under personal leadership; the intensified penetration of society by the state; the creation of a virtual wall of regulations and restrictions that more tightly controls the flow of ideas, culture, and capital into and out of the country; and the significant projection of Chinese power."³⁴

This authoritarian and nationalistic ideology is rooted in Chinese history. The traditional China Order formed and solidified in the Qin and the Han dynasties (221 BC to 220 AD), an imperial state of Confucian-Legalism claiming a Mandate of Heaven with authority to unify and rule the whole known world, dominated China's thinking for much of the past two millennia.³⁵ Since its founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, despite its harsh rhetoric critical of the two millennia-long feudal imperial tradition and its claimed replacement with the "new" China, Chinese leadership continued to follow and reinforce this centralized and

³⁴ Economy, Elizabeth C. *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State*, Oxford University Press, May 3, 2018. In a discussion about this book, Economy thinks there are mixed motivations such as Xi's personal ambition, China's ambition, and Xi's view of himself on par with Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping behind Xi's aggressive actions. See "'The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State' by Elizabeth C. Economy", *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 17, 2018. <https://www.cfr.org/event/third-revolution-xi-jinping-and-new-chinese-state-elizabeth-c-economy>

³⁵ Wang, Fei-Ling, *The China Order: Centralia, World Empire, and the Nature of Chinese Power*, SUNY Press, September 2017.

authoritarian tradition on the basis of the Chinese Communist ideology. Since 1949, China has been an authoritarian state ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), ultimately concerned with its own survival and maintenance of its monopoly over China.³⁶

Since the early days of the 1930s and 1940s, the CCP adopted Leninist dogmatism to unify the Party and consolidate its power. Through aggressive purges, thought control, and coercive tactics, the CCP reorganized the Party's upper structure.³⁷ When the CCP was caught in a bitter power struggle within the Party and with other forces, such as the Chinese Nationalists and later the U.S., the CCP leadership believed it was living in a world of "You-Die, I-Live." The leadership believes that gaining and keeping absolute power is essential to operate in what they view as a brutal world, and the CCP relies on control of personnel, propaganda, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to do so.³⁸ These have continued to define China's contemporary style of governance and leadership.

Other than *authoritarianism*, a major source of legitimization of CCP authority that dictates China's foreign policy is *nationalism*.³⁹ In particular, there is a top-down Chinese nationalism promoted by the CCP, which has sought to convince the Chinese people that the CCP has extricated China from a "century of humiliation" by foreign powers. After the Tiananmen Square crackdown of the democracy movement in 1989 and being concerned with its legitimacy being challenged, the CCP intensified its campaign to indoctrinate its type of traditional

³⁶ McGregor, Richard, *The Party, The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, Harper, June 8th 2010.

³⁷ Gao, Hua, *How the Red Sun Rose: The Origin and Development of the Yan'an Rectification Movement, 1930-1945* Chinese University Press, Jan 29, 2019.

³⁸ Eleanor Albert, Eleanor, Beina Xu, Lindsay Maizland, "The Chinese Communist Party", *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 6, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinese-communist-party>
For example, the PLA, rather than China's national army, is actually CCP's own private armed forces.

³⁹ Garver, John W. *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations for the People's Republic of China*, Oxford University Press, 2016. Chapter 28.

nationalism. After 1989, Chinese leadership concluded that the biggest mistake the CCP had made in allowing the democracy movement to take place in the first place was paying inadequate attention to the ideological education of Chinese youth. Subsequently, the key theme that Chinese youth had to learn was “how China had been humiliated by the foreign imperialist powers in the old days before 1949 . . . The CCP mandated a curriculum of patriotic and national defense education to inoculate young Chinese against peaceful evolution by Western capitalist powers led by the U.S.”⁴⁰ Announced in 1991 and functional by 1994, Chinese leadership initiated patriotic education to revive patriotism with the themes of “Chinese tradition and history, and national unity and territorial integrity” to replace the “diminishing socialism and fulfil the ideological vacuum.”⁴¹ Some analysts believe the CCP’s “Patriotic Education Campaign” of the 1990s and 2000s spurred a rise of regime-sponsored Chinese nationalism.⁴² This campaign gained traction and helped lay the groundwork for nationalism that exists in China today.

Moreover, by the mid-1990s, a bottom-up Chinese nationalism first took its shape that was “a genuine and vibrant nationalism which was independent of the regime, and though generally supportive of the regime, at times became critical of it.”⁴³ This partly spontaneous, and partly government-fed Chinese nationalism enjoys widespread support among Chinese youth. It is to be noted that this type of populist nationalism is a double-edged sword, which may operate to garner public support for a nationalistic confrontation against the U.S., or for unifying Taiwan.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 476.

⁴¹ Chen, Rou-lan, “Chinese Youth Nationalism In a Pressure Cooker” in Dittmer, Lowell (Editor), *Taiwan and China, Fitful Embrace*, University of California Press, October 2017, P. 103.

⁴² Shirk, Susan, *China: Fragile Superpower: How China’s Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise*, New York, pp. 164-165.

⁴³ Garver, John W. *China’s Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations for the People’s Republic of China*, Oxford University Press, 2016, Chapter 28.

What are China's ambitions on the heels of its authoritarian and nationalistic ideology? A popular "global ambitions" view is that China's general ambitions based on its ideology are *global* and not limited to the Asia-Pacific region only. As a rapidly growing economic and military powerhouse since the 1990s and particularly under the current leadership since 2012, China has tightened its grip on the internal system and pursued a new international order to serve its interests. This authoritarian and nationalistic leadership style has resulted in a confrontational stance on multiple fronts, including Xinjiang, India, the South China Sea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan over such various issues as trade, technology, public health, finance, and international organizations. China's aggressive stance on these areas of concern has caused a deep distrust and painted a negative view of China on the international stage.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Chinese leadership has argued not only that China has the "right to development," but also that the current model of global governance led by the West is deteriorating and should therefore be replaced by a Chinese model of generating wealth without a democracy. The Chinese concept of a "community of common destiny" offers a "China solution," which China claims is a more effective pathway to the future than liberal democracy. China has also sought to export facial recognition, policing, and crowd control technologies aimed

⁴⁴ Silver, Laura, Kat Devlin, Christine Huang, "Unfavorable Views of China Reach Historic Highs in Many Countries, Majorities say China has handled COVID-19 outbreak poorly", *Pew Research Center*, October 6, 2020. <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/10/06/unfavorable-views-of-china-reach-historic-highs-in-many-countries/?fbclid=IwAR3lnBnCv6F9TIIJWRByL0qmAVLYJ6xuA7464w5Cq3sljUVtBV5QQSyDtW4> However, many in the survey consider China (not the U.S.) to be the dominant economic power.

at helping other authoritarian regimes resist calls for change and remain in power.”⁴⁵ Xi has made clear that his ambitions do not stop at the Asia-Pacific region, and that he is looking to remake a global order—the rules of the road—in ways that suit China more.⁴⁷

On the other hand, a “regional ambitions” view, not inconsistent with the “global ambitions” view that focuses more on ideology and propaganda, is that China’s ambitions are mainly *regional* and focus more on sovereignty and territories. This more limited view argues that China’s ambitions are in many ways dangerous, but that its sovereignty and territorial ambitions are limited to the Asia-Pacific region, or within China’s own periphery only. This view posits that some in the U.S. have exaggerated China’s threats and misjudged its intentions.⁴⁸ Under this perspective, while Chinese leadership has practiced "offensive realism" and focused on nationalism and worldwide propaganda, its main objective has been to ensure CCP’s survival and legitimacy, particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union. CCP General Secretary Xi may be overly ambitious, but this does not mean that the CCP regime is essentially a militant and expansionary regime that seeks to communize the world. With strengthened national power, Xi believes that China now has the power to counteract the West and bring back the benefits that

⁴⁵ “China on behalf of 139 countries calls for full realization of right to development at UN”, Sept. 4, 2019. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-09/14/c_138390990.htm#:~:text=In%20order%20to%20fully%20realize,a%20shared%20future%20for%20humanity.

⁴⁶ Harold, Scott W., Winning the ideological competition with China, The ASAN Forum, March - April 2020 Vol.8, No.2. <http://www.theasanforum.org/winning-the-ideological-competition-with-china/http://www.theasanforum.org/winning-the-ideological-competition-with-china/>

⁴⁷ Eleanor Albert, Eleanor, Beina Xu, Lindsay Maizland, “The Chinese Communist Party”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 6, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinese-communist-party>

⁴⁸ Nathan, Andrew, “What Now?” *China File*, August 5, 2020. <https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/what-now>

China should have reaped. This view provides that Xi simply seeks to consolidate the rule of the CCP to prevent the West's attempt to affect a regime change in China.⁴⁹

Regardless, China's regional ambitions in the Asia-Pacific region are clear and "nearly as consequential" as its global ambitions.^{50 51} While China's sovereignty and territorial ambitions may only be regional, though the Asia-Pacific region is a big region, it does not mean that the surrounding situations are any less volatile, particularly for Taiwan. China's grand strategy, expanded under Xi's leadership, is to undermine U.S.-Asian alliances and replace the U.S. with China as the regional hegemon in East Asia. Chinese leadership uses various geoeconomic tools to influence or coerce weaker regional powers. For instance, it has unveiled the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), modernized its military forces to threaten its neighbors and push the U.S. beyond Japan and the Philippines, and ignored international law to construct artificial islands in the South China Sea.⁵² As former Prime Minister and elder statesman of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, put it, China has "a culture 4,000 years old with 1.3 billion people, many of great talent . . . How could they not aspire to be number 1 in Asia, and the world?"⁵³

⁴⁹ Deng, Yuwen, "The Trump Administration's Strategic Misconceptions of the CCP", *New York Times* (In Chinese, Translated by the author of this study), August 31, 2020. <https://cn.nytimes.com/opinion/20200831/trump-ccp-strategic-misjudgement/zh-hant/?fbclid=IwAR0esKrhBkNUf8u9EDLBNbWq8SNQb69SLrIWZcPCY2L9W2yb-DW5PlfeKWM>

⁵⁰ Mastro, Oriana Skylar, "The Stealth Superpower: How China hid its Global Ambitions", *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2019.

⁵¹ Ronkin, Noa, "FSI's Incoming Center Fellow Oriana Skylar Mastro Discusses Chinese Ambitions, Deteriorating U.S.-China Relations", 2020. <https://aparc.fsi.stanford.edu/news/fsi%E2%80%99s-incoming-center-fellow-oriana-mastro-discusses-chinese-ambitions-deteriorating-us-china>

⁵² Blackwill, Robert D, "Trump's Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem", *Council of Foreign Affairs*, April 2019, P. 9. [https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR%2084 Blackwill Trump 0.pdf](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR%2084%20Blackwill%20Trump%200.pdf)

⁵³ Lee Kuan Yew, quoted in Graham Allison and Robert Blackwill, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013): 2.



[This handout photo taken and released on February 10, 2020 was a Taiwanese F-16 fighter jet flying next to a Chinese H-6 bomber \(top\) in Taiwan's airspace \[File: Handout/Taiwan's Defense Ministry/AFP\]](#)

B. Why Has China Sought to Alter the Status Quo in the Taiwan Strait?

A major factor for the shifting of the status quo on the Taiwan Strait has been Chinese leadership's aggressive stance there since the mid-2010s. But why has China sought to alter the status quo there? China's regional ambitions in the Asia-Pacific region are clear and dangerous, and its most important sovereignty objective is Taiwan, for which they have always indicated their willingness to use force if necessary.

Chinese leadership has long considered Taiwan an inalienable part of China. Unifying Taiwan has been a sacred mission for Chinese leaders since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. There are signs that Chinese leadership is growing impatient and "believes the world will sit by if China invades Taiwan."⁵⁴ The leadership was impressed by Russian President Vladimir Putin's seizure of Crimea, which met little resistance from the West. Many among China's elites and even ordinary citizens have embraced China's military actions in the Taiwan

⁵⁴ Gries, Peter and Tao Wang, "Will China Seize Taiwan? Wishful Thinking in Beijing, Taipei, and Washington Could Spell War in 2019", *Foreign Affairs*, February 15, 2019.

Strait.⁵⁵ Dissatisfied with the U.S.-led status quo and armed with a growing economic and military power, China has been increasing its pressure to neutralize the U.S. influence in the region and further isolate Taiwan, threatening the “peace” in the Taiwan Strait.⁵⁶⁵⁷

Since the mid-2010s, Chinese leadership appears to speed up its unification timetable for Taiwan toward the leadership’s unfinished “mission”. In addition to taking non-military actions hostile to Taiwan to isolate Taiwan internationally, the most provocative and dangerous military action taken by Chinese leadership has been its decision to deploy numerous warplanes near or circling Taiwan on an almost daily basis. Occasionally, these warplanes even crossed the “median line,” an unofficial center line in the Taiwan Strait established to prevent accidents and reduce risks as understood by both sides and then denying a median line ever existed. The scale and audacity of these military actions has been the most brazen action in the Taiwan Strait in decades.

Chinese leadership’s ideological basis to unify Taiwan rests on the “One China Principle,” which provides that (1) there is only “One China”; (2) the PRC is the only legitimate government representing China; and (3) Taiwan is a part of China. In short, there is only one China and Taiwan is an inalienable part of it. The “One China Principle” is a political doctrine Chinese leadership has long advocated as part of its desire to unify Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, with total legitimacy over “all of China.” It is rooted in the CCP’s notion and preoccupation of “One China,” which largely ignores Taiwan’s own distinct “Chinese” (ethnic Chinese) history and identity, let alone Taiwan’s non-Chinese aboriginals who occupied the Island of Taiwan long before the ethnic

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ “With the World Distracted, China Intimidates Taiwan”, *The Economist*, April 8, 2020.
<https://www.economist.com/asia/2020/04/08/with-the-world-distracted-china-intimidates-taiwan?fbclid=IwAR23j1Xu1yYRoqkl5MmV-TeiuuCSV7KSqCOO-LJqMPOG251HeHJf4Uh95dw>

Chinese did.⁵⁸ The “One China Principle” has been ingrained quasi-religiously into the CCP/PRC psyche and considered untouchable and nonnegotiable. It is a political doctrine elevated to a “principle” based on the nationalistic notion advanced zealously by the CCP.

The “One China Principle” is consistent with China’s national strategy and its ambitions to create a favorable international environment. Chinese leadership seeks international conditions that are conducive to its continued development and compatible with its aspirations for its rejuvenation as a “great modern socialist country.” As the leaders view a divided China as a weak China, they argue that “full reunification”—unification with Taiwan on Beijing’s terms and completing the integration of Hong Kong and Macau by the end of 2049—is a fundamental condition of national rejuvenation.”⁵⁹

Chinese nationalism claims that Taiwan under the “One China Principle,” has been China’s inseparable territory from ancient times and will always be a part of China. Taiwan was indeed, from 1887 to 1895, a province of China’s Qing Dynasty. After the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894–95, the Qing Dynasty in 1895 ceded Taiwan to Japan, which ruled the island for 50 years until its defeat in World War II in 1945. After being a Japanese colony from 1895 to 1945, Taiwan was returned to China under the Republic of China in 1945. However, Taiwan has never been a part of the People’s Republic of China founded in 1949. Nevertheless, as far as Chinese

⁵⁸ “Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan to President Xi Jinping of China, Joint Declaration by the Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan within the Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee”, January 9, 2019 <https://international.thenewslens.com/article/111667>

⁵⁹ “Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2020 Annual Report to Congress”, Office of the Secretary of Defense, P.3 <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>

nationalism is concerned, Taiwan has always been an inalienable part of China, and it is China's sacred mission to unify Taiwan and bring it back to the "motherland."

- Obsession Over Taiwan

For generations, school children in China have been taught that Taiwan is part of the "motherland." Taiwan, the treasure island, has been characterized as one of China's "core interests," worth pursuing at almost all costs, even if it means being involved in a direct conflict with the U.S. It then begs the question why Taiwan holds such a stronghold in Chinese leadership's psyche. One analyst construes as follows: "There are four key reasons. Firstly, Taiwan holds historic importance . . . Secondly, because the leadership has put such gravity on reunification . . . Thirdly, Taiwan holds strategic importance . . . Lastly, the People's Liberation Army's primary mission-focus has been on Taiwan for the last 15 years, creating concerns that a failure to bring Taiwan to heel could cause the PLA to exert authority over the civilian leadership, setting back years of reforms and driving China into isolation."⁶⁰ Thus, Taiwan's historical, cultural, and strategic importance has driven China's blatant obsession over Taiwan.

The public and official position taken by Chinese leadership and virtually all Chinese scholars on Taiwan has been that Taiwan's unification with China is "*historically inevitable*."⁶¹

⁶⁰ Zhu, Feng, "Why Taiwan Really Matters to China" *China Brief*, Volume: 4 Issue: 19, September 30, 2004.

⁶¹ "When the global power landscape truly enters an era in which the "two powers" of China and the United States are running neck and neck, it is inevitable that the United States will once again "abandon" Taiwan as a "strategic high-risk asset." ""Strategic high-risk assets": the power landscape, U.S.-China relations, and the transmutation of Taiwan's strategic role" By Xin Qiang, head of the Fudan University Taiwan Research Center 信强: 复旦大学台湾研究中心主任, 教授 - Source: *Journal of Taiwan Studies*, 2020, No. 4. - 信强: "战略高危资产": 权力格局、中美关系与台湾战略角色的嬗变_爱思想

Proponents of this deterministic view are often firm believers of offensive realism.⁶² The argument is typically first framed within the context of the power competition between the U.S. and China. Next, it claims that China either has gained or will gain enough economic and military prowess to overtake the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait and unify Taiwan sooner or later. China has sought to alter the status quo because the U.S. has either lost or will lose its capabilities and willingness to defend Taiwan. Espousing such a view that Taiwan's unification with China is only a matter of time, unifying Taiwan is, to China, simply *historically inevitable*.

On the other hand, a relatively small number of Chinese scholars apparently do not share this official and deterministic view.⁶³ They are less confident about China's economic and military capabilities and willingness to take Taiwan by force due to the prohibitive costs it will require, let alone having to oversee Taiwan's democratic population of over 23 million.⁶⁴

Is Chinese leadership's and Chinese policy makers/scholars' confidence in unifying Taiwan justified? What are the expected benefits and costs for China to unify Taiwan under the "One China Principle" by force? The expected costs range from very high to unacceptably high. However, under the "One China Principle" taken at its face value, costs are of no concern to China. The leadership has tried to indoctrinate the general public that its "One China Principle" should be pursued at all costs. In fact, China is said to be willing to risk a war with the U.S. over Taiwan, even in a war that China knows that it will lose. One leading analyst finds that "Chinese leaders believe that, if they were to let Taiwan go independent and not respond, they would

⁶² There are notable exceptions such as Yan, Xuetong, but he is considered by many and himself to hold the minority view.

⁶³ Interview conducted by the author through telephone in the summer of 2020 with an anonymous Chinese international relations scholar at a leading University.

⁶⁴ A few Chinese military analysts have expressed their concern about the PLA's capabilities to invade Taiwan from a purely military perspective, but they fall short of discussing the *inevitable* view of Taiwan's fate.

probably be overthrown by their own nationalistic people. Therefore, I think they would be willing to engage in what we might call "self-defeating military adventures" in order to prevent that result, even if they knew they were going to lose."⁶⁵ In short, the Chinese leaders may be more prone than initially believed to take an *irrational* decision to go to war with the U.S. over Taiwan, regardless of its costs and the prospect of likely defeat.

Rationality, as defined in international relations, posits that nation states "have consistent, ordered preferences, and they calculate costs and benefits of alternative courses of action in order to maximize their utility in view of those preferences."⁶⁶ "[W]e put ourselves in the position of a statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy under certain circumstances, and we ask ourselves what the rational alternatives are from which a statesman may choose . . . and which of these rational alternatives this particular statesman, acting under these circumstances, is likely to choose."⁶⁷ In short, leaders are expected to carefully evaluate a given preference's expected costs and benefits to decide whether it is rational before reaching their executive decision. Under this rational framework, it does not appear rational for China to go to war in the Taiwan Strait.

Of course, a country may still "rationally go to war even though it was certain it would lose. First, the country could value fighting itself, either as an ultimate goal or as a means for improving man and society. Second...the state might choose war because of considerations of

⁶⁵ Excerpts from David Lampton, "Why the Taiwan Issue is so Dangerous", *Frontline*, PBS, 2014.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/china/experts/taiwan.html>

⁶⁶ Keohane, Robert O. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Princeton University Press, 1984, P. 27.

⁶⁷ Morgenthau, Hans J, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978, pp. 4-15.

honor, domestic politics, or international reputation.”⁶⁸⁶⁹ In this regard, Chinese leadership could conceivably value fighting for the motherland’s honor. Nevertheless, risking a war with the U.S., the country with the strongest military power across the globe, with Chinese leadership’s very own survival at stake, still renders it an ill-considered and irrational political decision.

Nevertheless, Chinese leadership, at least publicly and rhetorically, appear not sufficiently concerned with the costs of enforcing the “One China Principle” in the Taiwan Strait. One finds “little in the public domain to indicate that the Chinese political leadership has given this matter the attention it deserves.”⁷⁰ Under this principle, Taiwan appears to be an end in itself, China’s “Holy Grail,” and rationality appears to play no or little part in the leadership’s policymaking and public discussion.

How does one explain the leadership’s seemingly irrational position on Taiwan based on its “One China Principle”? One explanation is tactical and argues that the purpose of its harsh rhetoric is simply to exaggerate the issue’s importance and enhance the leadership’s self-confidence in deterring Taiwan and the U.S.

Another explanation is cultural and *Constructivist* and argues that “One China” is not merely important because it is an important objective fact, but also because it has cultural significance to the Chinese. Material facts acquire meaning through human cognition and social interaction, and this meaning is constructed from a “complex and specific mix of history, ideas,

⁶⁸ Jervis, Robert, “War and Misperceptions”, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (Spring, 1988), P. 677.

⁶⁹ Fearon, James D. “Rationalist Explanations for War”, *International Organization*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Summer, 1995), pp. 379-414.

⁷⁰ Gompert, David C, Astrid Stuth Cevallos, Cristina L. Garafolam “War with China, Thinking Through the Unthinkable”, The RAND Corporation, 2016, (P. x).
https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1100/RR1140/RAND_RR1140.pdf

norms, and beliefs' exploited by the leadership.⁷¹ One must gain this cultural and historical understanding to explain China's behavior toward Taiwan. The concept of "One China" and the political doctrine of "One China Principle" form Chinese leadership's ideological foundation regarding China's territorial completeness, national greatness, and historical inevitability.⁷²

Territorial completeness is likely the most prominent features of the "One China" concept. Translated into modern terminology, territorial completeness can be rephrased roughly as state sovereignty valued highly by Chinese leadership, which considers it incomplete without having state sovereignty over Taiwan. For example, the norm of state sovereignty has "created a predisposition for non-interference that precedes any "cost analysis States may undertake."⁷³ It is not that Chinese leadership is not concerned about the costs and benefits of taking Taiwan by force, but the explanation should be based more on China's constructed beliefs about state sovereignty rather than on just a rational pursuit of objectives. The application of the "One China Principle" seems irrational from a rational perspective of costs and benefits. When viewed from the new viewpoint that is cultural and *Constructivist*, however, it appears more *non-rational* than irrational.

⁷¹ Slaughter, Anne-Marie, International Relations, Principal Theories in: Wolfrum, R. (Ed.) Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law (Oxford University Press, 2011) E. Constructivism
https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/slaughter/files/722_intlrelprincipaltheories_slaughter_20110509zg.pdf

⁷² The closest concept in U.S. history is perhaps manifest destiny, the nineteenth-century doctrine or belief that the expansion of the U.S. throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable.
https://americanexperience.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Manifest-Destiny-and-U.S-Westward-Expansion_.pdf In this study, ideology is defined as "a set of beliefs or principles, especially one which a political system, party, or organization is based." Cambridge Dictionary.
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/ideology>

⁷³ Slaughter, Anne-Marie, International Relations, Principal Theories in: Wolfrum, R. (Ed.) Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law (Oxford University Press, 2011) E. Constructivism.
https://scholar.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/slaughter/files/722_intlrelprincipaltheories_slaughter_20110509zg.pdf

C. China's Taiwan Policy in Practice

Provided that China's Taiwan policy based on its "One China Principle" is "non-rational" in principle, this policy in practice is more *rational and pragmatic*. Since the early 2000s, Chinese leadership has adopted a "dual track" strategy toward Taiwan through which it deterred Taiwan from proclaiming official independence with "hard" military actions, but also sought to win the hearts and minds of Taiwanese people with "soft" social and economic incentives.⁷⁴ With this "soft" and "hard" (or "carrots" and "sticks") policy as a background, China's Taiwan Affairs Office issued a statement in 2004 for the first time that the *prevention of Taiwan's official independence* was China's top priority for its Taiwan policy. At the time, China realized that "a policy aimed at reunification was unrealistic under the current circumstances and would conflict with its efforts to build up the image of a peaceful rising power. On March 14, 2005, this policy was formalized by the Anti-Secession Law passed by the third conference of the Tenth National People's Congress."⁷⁵

Until around 2016, China's policy of preventing Taiwan's official independence and maintaining the status quo was consistent with the long-standing U.S. policy in the Taiwan Strait. Both China and the U.S. effectively prevented Chen Shui-bian, Taiwan's president from 2002 to 2008, from further pursuing Taiwan's official independence, though he came close. This policy also allowed Taiwan's president from 2008 to 2016, Ma Ying-jeou, to pursue his policy of

⁷⁴ Templeman, Kharis, "China's Military Incursions Around Taiwan Aren't a Sign of Imminent Attack", *The Diplomat*, October 22, 2020.

https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/chinas-military-incursions-around-taiwan-arent-a-sign-of-imminent-attack/?fbclid=IwAR05alC0OfVljopUuz2cvzNEs-L6KutmcxyWiUmhc_BWiDLUcdz0dzaDY5M

⁷⁵ Huang, Jing, *Taiwan and China, Fitful Embrace* by Lowell Dittmer (Editor), October 2017 P.240. <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520295988/taiwan-and-china>

advocating Taiwan to remain in the “One China” framework and pursue a peaceful breakthrough in Taiwan’s relations with China.⁷⁶



<https://www.economist.com/china/2020/10/22/chinas-half-loving-half-threatening-pitch-to-taiwan-doesnt-work>

From 2012 to 2016, the current Chinese leadership continued the previous leadership’s “dual track” strategy with both “soft” and “hard” approaches toward Taiwan. It continued to prevent Taiwan from reaching official independence by further reducing Taiwan’s international recognition while providing various economic incentives to win support for the general public in Taiwan. Rather than pressuring its reunification with China, it pursued a policy of preventing Taiwan’s official independence. Ma, the President of Taiwan, was also serving his second term during the same period, and Taiwan's relations with China were relatively stable and predictable.

⁷⁶ Ma’s “One China” framework is the so-called “1992 Consensus”, which is different from China’s “One China” framework based on the “One China Principle”. For the well-known “1992 Consensus”, see Chen, Yu-Jie, Jerome A. Cohen, “China-Taiwan Relations Re-Examined: The “1992 Consensus” and Cross-Strait Agreements” *U. Pa. Asian L. Rev.*, v.14. (2019).

However, Ma was unable to approve any political agreements or trust-building measures to improve Taiwan's relationship with China due mainly to his own rapid decline of support at home in Taiwan.⁷⁷ China, preoccupied with its changing relations with the U.S. and other priorities, appeared willing to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait during that period.

However, the situation in the Taiwan Strait began to change dramatically after 2016. Tsai Ing-wen, representing the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan and a former international trade attorney and law professor, defeated the Nationalists' candidate and was first elected as Taiwan's president in 2016 and reelected in 2020. Chinese leadership had doubts about Tsai's commitment to the "One China" framework, and Tsai's inaugural address for her first term in 2016 reflected her moderate China policy.⁷⁸ However, her insistence on the non-commitment to the "One China" framework has angered Chinese leadership, which then suspended formal communication with Taiwan altogether since 2016. They have repeatedly stressed that Taiwan must accept the "One China" framework to resume communication.

Dissatisfied with Tsai's non-commitment to the "One China Principle" or the One China framework, Chinese leadership implemented a series of aggressive actions to punish the Tsai Administration.⁷⁹ Since 2016, China sought to isolate Taiwan diplomatically, divide Taiwan internally, and threaten Taiwan militarily. China has maintained its diplomatic pressure on Taiwan and reduced Taiwan's international space by thwarting its efforts to participate in international organizations such as the World Health Organization, the International Civil

⁷⁷ Huang, Jing, *Taiwan and China, Fitful Embrace* by Lowell Dittmer (Editor), October 2017 P.242. <https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520295988/taiwan-and-china>

⁷⁸ Paal, Douglas, "China, the U.S. and the Coming Taiwan Transition", *The Diplomat*, Dec. 29, 2015. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/china-the-u-s-and-the-coming-taiwan-transition/>

⁷⁹ Some in Taiwan's opposition are also upset about Tsai's non-commitment to the "One China" framework.

Aviation Organization, and the International Criminal Police Organization, and decreasing the number of countries that officially recognize Taiwan.⁸⁰ “It restarted the competition for diplomatic recognition, eventually flipping seven of Taiwan’s 22 formal allies, and forced international organizations to kick Taiwanese observers out. It stepped up pressure on foreign companies, including American-based ones, to list Taiwan as part of China on their websites.”⁸¹ Chinese leadership continues to provide assistance to Taiwan’s opposition and deploy warplanes repeatedly to circle Taiwan and violate Taiwan’s airspace.

Chinese leadership’s position toward Taiwan was made clear by Xi in his January 2, 2019 address about Taiwan.⁸² He emphasized that unification of Taiwan to China is the ultimate goal, and the model for Taiwan will be “One Country, Two Systems,” the very model which proved a disaster in Hong Kong. Anticipating Xi’s speech about Taiwan, Tsai rejected the model almost immediately in her own speech given a few hours later in that same afternoon on January 2, 2019. Tsai said that “[t]his morning, China's President Xi Jinping delivered a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of the so-called "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan," proposing further exploration of a "One Country, Two Systems" scenario for Taiwan . . . I want to reiterate that Taiwan absolutely will not accept "One Country, Two Systems." The vast majority of Taiwanese also resolutely oppose "One Country, Two Systems," and this opposition is also a "Taiwan consensus.””⁸³ Xi’s speech backfired terribly in Taiwan, and Tsai’s rebuttal speech

⁸⁰ In 2019, China convinced the Solomon Islands and Kiribati to break diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

⁸¹ Templeman, “China’s Military Incursions Around Taiwan Aren’t a Sign of Imminent Attack”.

⁸² Xi, Jinping, “Working Together to Realize Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation and Advance China’s Peaceful Reunification” *Speech at the Meeting Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Issuance of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan* January 2, 2019. 习近平在《告台湾同胞书》发表40周年纪念会上的讲话（英文稿） http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/m/news/201904/t20190412_12155846.htm

⁸³ President Tsai issues statement on China's President Xi's "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan" January 2, 2019 <https://english.president.gov.tw/News/5621>

quoted above started her dramatic rebound from her party's dismal performance in the 2018 local elections. She was reelected as Taiwan's president in a landslide victory in the 2020 election.

Despite China's aggressive actions toward Taiwan since 2016, its options appear to be limited. The Taiwan Strait continues to present significant practical obstacles for Chinese leadership to take further military actions without risking a full-blown conflict other than the frequent deployment of warplanes near or circling Taiwan. The leadership has banned virtually all Chinese tourists from visiting Taiwan and Chinese students from studying in Taiwan. It has "thrown away most of its non-military leverage in a fruitless effort to compel [Tsai's] endorse its one China principle".⁸⁴

China's aggressive stance toward Taiwan may have backfired because it has quickly hardened the de facto alliance between the U.S. and Taiwan militarily, economically, and politically. China itself is locked in an intense competition with the U.S. on multiple fronts. Other than Taiwan, the U.S. is seeking to form a stronger and more structural alliance with its formal and de facto allies, such as Japan, Australia, India, and more to counteract China's advances. In short, Chinese leadership's Taiwan policy appears to have positioned Taiwan further away from unification more than ever. The leadership's Taiwan policy, with its "dual track" with a mixture of soft and hard approaches, has not worked well.⁸⁵ Thus far, China has not yet shown its ability to respond to the growing sense of Taiwanese identity among the general public of Taiwan. Instead, armed with significant and growing economic and military powers, the Chinese leaders

⁸⁴ Templeman, "China's Military Incursions Around Taiwan Aren't a Sign of Imminent Attack".

⁸⁵ "China's Half-Loving, Half-Threatening Pitch to Taiwan Doesn't Work", *Economist*, Oct. 22, 2020.

<https://www.economist.com/china/2020/10/22/chinas-half-loving-half-threatening-pitch-to-taiwan-doesnt-work>

seem to believe that the best approach to deal with this growing Taiwanese identity is doubling down on its pressure.

To take Taiwan by force, China does not have to be in a “peer competition” or even a “near peer competition” in the global military strength scale to compete with the U.S. , because China just has to be competitive in the Taiwan Strait.⁸⁶ The Chinese leaders simply need to convince themselves that the U.S. cannot or will not be able to defend Taiwan effectively. First, it is difficult logistically for the U.S. military to effectively defend Taiwan because it is spread thin across many strategic locations worldwide.⁸⁷ Geographically, the Taiwan Strait is next to China and the closest U.S. base from the region is in Okinawa, Japan, still hours away from the Taiwan Strait. Second, China’s military power has been approaching that of the U.S., and China may believe that the U.S. lacks the will to defend Taiwan because China considers Taiwan a “core interest” while the U.S. does not.

If China is convinced that the U.S. cannot and will not be able to defend Taiwan effectively, what are its options to take Taiwan by force? A World War II D-Day style of direct amphibious invasion is almost certain to be costly and uncertain both militarily and politically.⁸⁸ Such a direct invasion is a huge gamble which can potentially topple Chinese leadership itself. Perhaps more importantly, this D-Day style direct invasion of Taiwan or other less direct military options are

⁸⁶ Christensen, Thomas, “Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy”, *International Security*, Spring 2001. <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/posing-problems-without-catching-chinas-rise-and-challenges-us-security-policy>

⁸⁷ However, US forces have been moving back to the Indo-Pacific Theater.

⁸⁸ There are other military options for the Chinese forces which seem less costly such as Air and Maritime Blockade, Limited Force or Coercive Options, and Air and Missile Campaign. However, these other options are perhaps more complicated politically for an extended blockade are more likely to invite other countries to intervene, not to mention significantly increase the likelihood of a successful US military intervention. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>, pp.113-114.

likely unnecessary for China to address the essence of the Taiwan issue, because it is more about sovereignty than about territorial conquest for Chinese leadership. No one in Chinese leadership shows “any desire to run Taiwan’s day-to-day affairs, nor do they have any pretense that would know how....Beijing merely needs Taiwan’s return to an abstract ‘one China’ policy.”⁸⁹ Therefore, a far less costly and a more desirable option for China is likely a form of hybrid warfare.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Christensen, Thomas, “Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy”, *International Security*, Spring 2001, P. 23.

⁹⁰ Bowe, Alexander, “China’s Overseas United Front Work Background and Implications for the United States”, U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, August 24, 2018, P.18.
https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China's%20Overseas%20United%20Front%20Work%20-%20Background%20and%20Implications%20for%20US_final_0.pdf

2. Taiwan

A. What is a Taiwanese identity and what it may lead to?

What is a Taiwanese identity? Identity refers to a sense of distinctiveness from one group to another. Taiwanese identity refers to a sense of distinctiveness derived from a Taiwanese group rather than from another group (e.g., Chinese), and Taiwanese identity has been growing in Taiwan. Taiwan's march to consolidate a national identity that is more Taiwanese than Chinese is clear. This trend is particularly evident for an "exclusive Taiwanese identity" (i.e., identifying oneself as solely Taiwanese rather than both Taiwanese/Chinese) since 2018.⁹¹

Not only a Taiwanese identity is growing among the Taiwanese in Taiwan, it is likely prevalent or growing among the Taiwanese in China. For over a million of Taiwanese who have settled down in China, "Taiwanese are for the most part settled and can easily blend in (in China), but they refuse to identify themselves as 'Chinese.'"⁹² Many Taiwanese who have settled in China for years and could easily blend in still persistently refuse to be assimilated as "Chinese" because they feel a sense of distinctiveness, or "Taiwanese identity."⁹³

Although the Taiwanese share many cultural traits with the Chinese, the two groups have been separated by historical forces over decades and centuries, and they typically lack a common set of experiences or values. Taiwan, an island off the coast of Mainland China, has long been inhabited first by indigenous peoples not culturally and ethnically connected to the Chinese.

⁹¹ See <https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/upload/44/doc/6961/TaiwanChinese.jpg>. However, it isn't clear whether "Chinese" refers to a citizen of the PRC or an ethnic Chinese.

⁹² Liu, Gang and Weixu Wu, "Mingling but Not Merging: Changes and Continuities in the Identity under Reconstruction", Dittmer, Lowell (Editor), *Taiwan and China, Fitful Embrace*, October 2017, P. 64. The survey was conducted some time ago and maybe somewhat outdated.

⁹³ Ibid, 69, but there may be a variation among the Taiwanese settling in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

From the latter period of China's Ming Dynasty and throughout the Qing Dynasty around 1683-1895, waves of ethnic Chinese immigrants settled in Taiwan. In 1887, Taiwan became a province of the Qing Dynasty. In 1895, after the Qing forces were defeated by the Japanese in the first Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan was ceded in full sovereignty to Japan and became a Japanese colony until the end of World War II in 1945. Therefore, both the indigenous population and the ethnic Chinese immigrant population lived as subjects of the Japanese Empire from 1895 until 1945.

Before Japan was defeated in World War II in 1945 by the U.S.-led allied forces, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, facing the possible issue of the future of Taiwan in the early 1940s, made the decision to support the return of Taiwan to China. At the time, the Chinese Nationalist government-controlled China as the Chinese Communists were a growing guerilla force. Roosevelt did so without giving his decision serious consideration and considering whether Taiwan at large wanted to be incorporated into China.⁹⁴

After the Chinese Nationalists were defeated by the Chinese Communists and fled Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949, Taiwan underwent democratization in the 1980s and 1990s during which Taiwan was ruled by a small group of defeated Chinese Nationalists seeking to recover Mainland China from the Communists. The Chinese Nationalists naturally considered themselves Chinese and were using Taiwan as a strategic base from which to launch a counterattack during the Chinese Civil War, which did not end formally. It was not until the 1980s when Taiwan transformed from an authoritarian state into a democracy, which changed the perception of the general Taiwanese public of democratic political values.

⁹⁴ Bush, Richard C., *At Cross Purposes: U.S.—Taiwan Relations since 1942*, University of Hawaii Press, 2014, Chapter 2.

Despite the growing Taiwanese identity, separate from a solely Chinese or jointly Taiwanese/Chinese identity, it is unclear whether this growing identity will translate into a Taiwanese nationalist movement in the path of Taiwan's official independence. Although the general public in Taiwan has increasingly identified themselves as solely Taiwanese, this organic home grown identity does not necessarily indicate the presence of support for Taiwan's official independence.⁹⁵ For decades, there has been solid support from the general public in maintaining the status quo, namely de facto independence, as opposed to official independence.⁹⁶ This is likely because Taiwan's general public is "acutely aware that moving toward independence swiftly might invite a Chinese military invasion." While the public support for an independence movement is at its highest in history, "maintaining the status quo forever" and "decide later" still enjoyed over 50 percent of support among the public until around 2018.⁹⁷

However, starting in 2018-2019, public opinion in Taiwan began to shift dramatically for there has been a sharp increase in support for Taiwan's official independence at a later date and a modest increase for official independence as soon as possible.⁹⁸ The events in Hong Kong that discredited China's model of "One Country, Two systems" for the general public in Taiwan is likely the cause for this dramatic uptick.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ Rigger, Shelley, "Taiwan's Rising Rationalism: Generations, Politics, and Taiwanese Nationalism" The East-West Center Washington, 2006.

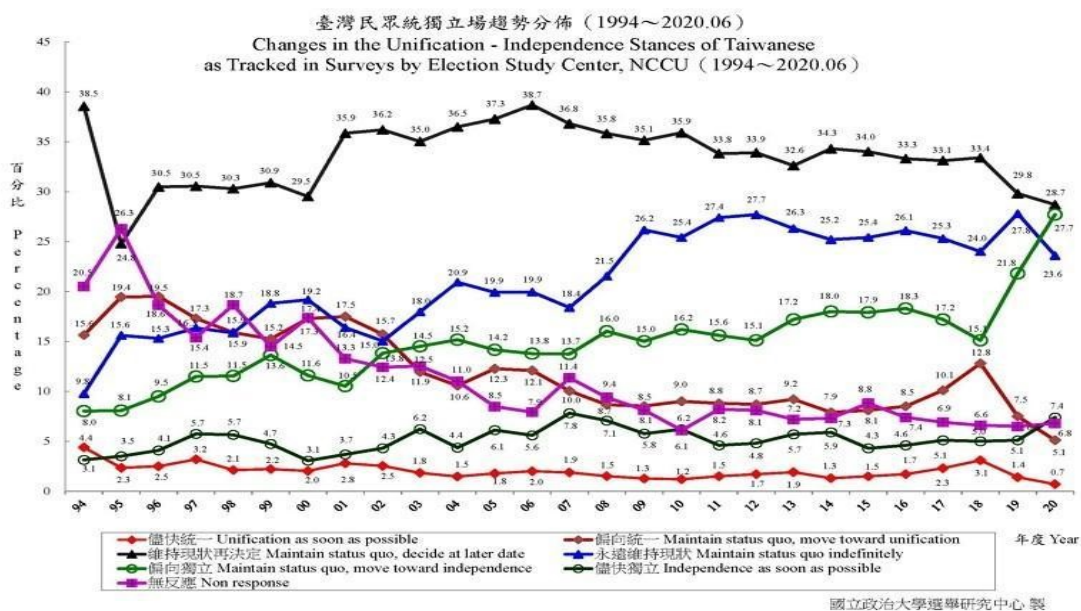
⁹⁶ Hsiao, Russel, "New Polling Data Reflect Deepening Taiwanese Identity" *Commonwealth Magazine*, August 2, 2019. <https://english.cw.com.tw/article/article.action?id=2502>

⁹⁷ Chen, Fang-Yu, Austin Wang, Charles K.S. Wu, Yao-Yuan Yeh, "Why Taiwan Continues to Fear a Chinese Invasion", *The National Interest*, June 26, 2020. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-taiwan-continues-fear-chinese-invasion-162879>

⁹⁸ <https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/course/news.php?Sn=167#> (The green line says "move toward independence" in Chinese but "maintain status quo, move toward independence" in English).

⁹⁹ Wang, Austin, Yao-Yuan Yeh, Charles K.S. Wu, Fang-Yu Chen, "Oppression of Hong Kong Will Make Taiwan Further Away From China" 壓迫香港會讓台灣更遠離中國, *Apple Daily*, November 24, 2020. https://tw.appledaily.com/forum/20201124/KPISNAX2LJGL3PHIPCYZNM6D24/?utm_source=Facebook_PicSee&fbclid=IwAR3IxbBiUOVQ2OL3PAjnYjT2Ldx-OncM4V9m0D-kpf7WubVluexOIE2k_ag

A Taiwanese identity is not only growing, but it is providing the necessary cornerstone on which Taiwanese nationalism could advance its appeal among the public. Taiwanese nationalism generally attempts to define a primary Taiwan-centric polity distinct from other polities, particularly one that is China-centric. Taiwan's official independence, on the other hand, is a political movement that aims to establish a sovereign and independent Taiwan state to replace the current ROC framework to govern Taiwan. Taiwan's official independence is in direct conflict with China's "One China Principle" and China's ultimate redline. As a result, virtually all experts on the Taiwan Strait agree it is highly provocative to China and is the easiest way to lead to war. It remains uncertain whether the growing Taiwanese identity would eventually pave the way for Taiwan's official independence eventually.



(Taiwan's National Chengchi University's Election Study Center images)

Against this backdrop, Chinese leadership regards this growing Taiwanese identity as creeping independence and suspicious development that must be curtailed at the outset. The emergence of a growing sense of Taiwanese identity worries Chinese leadership because it

represents a significant obstacle to China's efforts to win Taiwan's hearts and minds to eventual reunification. If this growing Taiwanese identity advanced into a true Taiwanese nationalist movement with the goal of eventual official independence, it would be a direct challenge to China's national goal of unifying Taiwan.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, this organic homegrown Taiwanese identity has begun to alter the status quo "peace" in the Taiwan Strait.

B. Taiwan's China Policy Since 2016

When Tsai Ing-wen was first elected and sworn in as President of Taiwan in 2016, she stated she would promote the following political foundations in her inaugural address: (1) the historical fact of the 1992 meeting between both sides of the Taiwan Strait, (2) the ROC's current Constitutional regime, (3) the achievements resulting from negotiations of both sides of the Strait over more than two decades, and (4) Taiwan's democratic principles and popular will. This framework suggested that she was taking a moderate position and would be willing to work with China in a pragmatic manner.^{101 102} However, China described Tsai's inaugural address as an "incomplete test answer" since she did not clearly commit to the "One China" framework. Since then, the Chinese government has terminated any official communication with Taiwan and taking an increasingly hardline and nationalistic position toward Taiwan.

¹⁰⁰ Brown, David G., "Rising Taiwan Consciousness: A Challenge for China?" in SAISPHERE, Dec. 2006 (5).

¹⁰¹ Full Text of President Tsai's Inaugural Address, CommonWealth Magazine (vol. 597), May 20, 2016. <https://english.cw.com.tw/article/article.action?id=90>

¹⁰² Chen, Yu-Jie, Jerome A. Cohen, "China-Taiwan Relations Re-Examined: The "1992 Consensus" and Cross-Strait Agreements" *U. Pa. Asian L. Rev.*, v.14. (2019), P. 16.

Reacting to China's aggressive stance toward Taiwan, Tsai has generally managed the situation in the Taiwan Strait in a controlled manner to prevent further destabilization.¹⁰³ She has continually pledged to maintain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and called for China to respect Taiwan's democracy.¹⁰⁴ Tsai, a former minister of the Mainland Affairs Council, Taiwan's cabinet-level agency planning and implementing policies with China, is experienced and skillful in sensitive dealings with China. She is walking a fine line between idealism and practicality. Her objective is to guard Taiwan's sovereignty and avoid being boxed in by China's One China framework, a policy that is "Pro-Sovereignty, Anti-annexation."¹⁰⁵ At the same time, she is also cautious not to provoke China.

Tsai apparently has been in charge of Taiwan's China policy herself and manages the hyper-sensitive Taiwan/Beijing/Washington triangular relations through her relatively small circle of trusted advisors and aides. She has been mindful to signal to China that Taiwan does not intend to unsettle the Taiwan Strait, while reassuring Washington that Taiwan is a predictable and reliable partner.¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷ She has not advanced the agenda of Taiwan's official independence, disappointing some hard line Taiwan independence supporters of her own political party.¹⁰⁸ At

¹⁰³ However, Chinese leadership and many Chinese scholars have accused Taiwan under Tsai has engaged in salami slicing creeping de jure independence, see 金灿荣: 李登辉病亡后的新形势里, 台海局势会走向武力冲突吗? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZF0OWZXIK8>

¹⁰⁴ Tsai arguably has changed the status quo somewhat if the status quo for Taiwan is to be in the One China framework, whether based on China's or Taiwan's own formula under former President Ma's so-called "1992 Consensus". Tsai has refused to be restricted within the One China framework.

¹⁰⁵ Chen, Fang-Yu, Austin Wang, Charles K.S. Wu, Yao-Yuan Yeh, "Why Taiwan Continues to Fear a Chinese Invasion", *The National Interest*, June 26, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Taiwan's military has reportedly followed an order to its pilots "not to fire the first shot" to avoid any possible unintended escalation of conflicts with China.

¹⁰⁷ Tsai's Minister of MAC (Chen, Ming-tong) was her deputy when she was the Minister of MAC herself, and she has sent her trusted confidant (Hsiao, Bi-khim) as Taiwan's representative to the U.S.

¹⁰⁸ However, some in Taiwan have accused Tsai's government is engaging in creeping independence. For example, the new Taiwanese passport cover will emphasize "Taiwan" rather than "Republic of China". But this apparently is the result of growing public pressure that many Taiwanese do not, when they present their passport, to be

the same time, she also has not committed to the “One China” framework, which has offended Chinese leadership and invited criticism from some in Taiwan, particularly from those in the opposition party.¹⁰⁹

C. Taiwan’s China Policy in the Future

Although Taiwan was never part of the PRC, it is almost certain that Taiwan’s future will involve the PRC in a significant way. Deng Xiaoping, the de facto leader of China from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, has proposed a well-known reunification model called “One Country, Two Systems.” Initially the model was designed for Taiwan, but it was first implemented in Hong Kong, a British Colony returned to China in 1997. Hong Kong presents a rare and valuable opportunity for China to show how this model might work for Taiwan.

The Taiwanese, on the other hand, mistrustful of Chinese leadership in general, have always been skeptical of the “One Country, Two Systems” model. They overwhelmingly rejected this model after problems began to surface in Hong Kong in the 2010s and the prospect for its implementation in Taiwan came to an end in 2020.¹¹⁰ What can Taiwan learn from Hong Kong to formulate its policy approach toward China?

confused with Mainland Chinese, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Tsai’s government at least has not engaged in official Taiwanese independence systematically under President Chen Shui-bian’s government from 2000-2008.

¹⁰⁹ According to this study’s survey, a few experts think Tsai’s non-commitment to the “One China” framework contributes significantly for the shifting of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.

¹¹⁰ 89% of Taiwanese oppose China’s “One Country, Two Systems”, *Taiwan News*, August 7, 2020.

<https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3982562>



<https://www.newsweek.com/2014/10/10/hong-kongs-student-protesters-want-democracy-any-cost-274310.html#slideshow/274167>

- The Hard Lessons of Hong Kong

Hong Kong presents three simple but hard lessons for Taiwan in dealing with Chinese leadership in the future: (1) an authoritarian political system and a liberal legal tradition is likely inherently irreconcilable; (2) China's "One Country, Two Systems" model will be ineffective and unworkable in Taiwan; and (3) the current Chinese leadership has *proven* untrustworthy and oppressive, and not a leadership with which Taiwan can expect to forge a cooperative partnership.

Lesson (1): Chinese leadership's violation of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, Hong Kong's Basic Law, and the concept of the rule of law is a lesson of how incompatible an authoritarian political system and a liberal legal institution can be. The Sino-British Joint Declaration, a legally binding international treaty signed in 1984 whereby the United Kingdom agreed to return Hong Kong to China in 1997, and the Hong Kong Basic Law, enacted by the

Chinese National People's Congress in 1990 to function as Hong Kong's "mini-constitution," are products of a political compromise.¹¹¹ Rather than as enforceable legal instruments setting out a system of rules designed to regulate the actions of member states, the two documents were products of a political compromise between China's political system and Hong Kong's legal tradition.¹¹² Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping needed Hong Kong to maintain its capitalist economy as an international financial center, which would be instrumental to the success of his reforms and opening policy in China. However, Deng did not want Hong Kong's liberal tradition to affect China's political system, and a compromise had to be made. In the Joint Declaration, the Chinese government agreed to "pre-commit itself to democracy."¹¹³ The Chinese government, with a weak tradition of the rule of law, voluntarily gave up its own power and granted the people of Hong Kong the rights that the Chinese in Mainland did not have. The Chinese government promised to give Hong Kong a "high degree of autonomy." It went even as far as stating "[t]he socialist system and policies shall not be practiced in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years."¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ The Sino-British Joint Declaration entered into force on May 27, 1985 and was registered at the United Nations by the Chinese and British Governments on June 12, 1985. The Declaration contains no enforcement or dispute provisions. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, to which both the UK and China are States Parties, provides only for the suspension of the operation of a treaty in the event that it is breached.

¹¹² The Oxford English Dictionary defines politics as "the activities associated with the governance of a country or area, especially the debate between parties having power." Law, meanwhile, is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of its penalties."

¹¹³ H.C. Kuan, "Escape from Politics: Hong Kong's Predicament of Political Development" (1998) 21 *International Journal of Public Administration* 1423, p. 1444.

¹¹⁴ Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong, <https://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/jd2.htm>

The Basic Law was also a compromise that the Chinese government had to make to appease Hong Kong's general public and the outside world. However, the underlying tension between the authoritarian Chinese system and the liberal Hong Kong tradition reflected in the Basic Law rendered it an unworkable legal instrument to govern. Nowhere is this tension more evident in how the Chief Executive of Hong Kong is selected. The Basic Law's Article 45 provided as follows: "The Chief Executive shall be selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People's Government. The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in Hong Kong[.]" Although the ultimate aim of the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly represented nominating committee is in line with democratic procedures, Chinese leadership, preoccupied with political control, was concerned that universal suffrage would produce a Chief Executive they would not approve of. Therefore, the wording of the Article was made vague, and the tension has been inherent and evident, which would surface dramatically in the years to come.

Another example of this tension is reflected in the Basic Law's Article 158: "The power of interpretation of this Law shall be vested in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) . . . authorize the courts of Hong Kong . . . to interpret on their own . . . When the Standing Committee makes an interpretation of the provisions concerned, the courts of the Region, in applying those provisions, shall follow the interpretation of the Standing Committee." Article 158 provides the NPC Standing Committee the power to authorize the Hong Kong courts to interpret their own laws. However, the courts are required to follow the NPC Standing Committee's interpretation. The uneasy tension between the Hong Kong courts and the NPC

Standing Committee has never been resolved. The incidents since 1997 have demonstrated that the Basic Law is a largely ineffective legal instrument, far short of a successful “mini constitution.”

This underlying tension and incompatibility are also *Irreconcilable*. In the first few years following the 1997 return of Hong Kong to China, the elections by the election committee for the Chief Executive and the LegCo took place in accordance with the Basic Law.¹¹⁵ However, Hong Kong government’s attempt to enact a national security law was aborted after a march of an estimated half a million people in opposition to the bill.¹¹⁶ After a failed political reform in 2005, a compromise was made between the Hong Kong government and the opposition resulting in a successful reform in 2010. Therefore, the Hong Kong government has shown its willingness to make compromises if necessary. However, the key difference between Beijing’s position and the opposition’s universal suffrage for Hong Kong’s Chief Executive is that Chinese leadership wants to make sure that the candidates are all “acceptable” from Beijing’s views. And the opposition is firmly opposed to any “screening” by the nominating committee as this would result in “fake” universal suffrage from their view.¹¹⁷ The difference between the two camps lies not just in who should be the candidate for the Chief Executive of Hong Kong and its selection processes, but also in their fundamental disagreement on key concepts such as “autonomy” and “democracy.”¹¹⁸ “An authoritarian regime that seeks to instill a democracy is an inherently unstable regime, because it will be taken to task to deliver.”¹¹⁹ As such, an authoritarian political

¹¹⁵ Chen, Albert HY., The Law and Politics of Constitutional Reform and Democratization in Hong Kong, unpublished manuscript, November 2014. P. 7

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 18.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹¹⁹ Kuan, H.C., “Escape from Politics: Hong Kong’s Predicament of Political Development” (1998) 21 *International Journal of Public Administration* 1423, p. 1444.

system has proven unable to coexist with a liberal legal tradition in this instance due to their inherent incompatibility.

Lesson (2): China's gross failure of implementing the "One Country, Two Systems" model in Hong Kong is a lesson of how ineffective and unworkable this model will be if implemented in Taiwan. Deng's "One Country Two Systems," initially designed for Taiwan, was first adopted in Hong Kong as a model of compromise to reconcile the differences between the Chinese socialist system and the British capitalist system. The Joint Declaration and the Basic Laws have been ineffective governing legal instruments in Hong Kong. A series of events, started with the moderate Gandhi inspired 2014 "Occupy Central" and the subsequent more radical "Umbrella Movement," the period from 2019 to 2020 witnesses widespread protests triggered by the introduction of the Fugitive Offenders amendment bill. In addition, the 2020 passage of a national security law for Hong Kong is a repeated reminder of how ineffective and unworkable the "One Country, Two Systems" framework can be.

In fact, the national security law passed by China's National People's Congress in Beijing on June 30, 2020, ahead of the 23rd anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from the British to the Chinese on July 1, 1997, effectively dismantled the "One Country, Two Systems" model. China imposed the national security law on Hong Kong, and Chinese leadership did not even pretend there were two systems, one in Hong Kong and one in Mainland China, anymore. Instead, China opted for one country and one system.

Lesson (3): Chinese leadership, if not the CCP itself, has proven unreliable and oppressive, particularly when it feels its authority is being challenged. Chinese leadership, even if may have had an initial intention to honor both the letter and the spirit of the Joint Declaration and the

Basic Law, has indicated that the ultimate goal of the political system is no longer the election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive by universal suffrage. It has no intention to respect the rule of law, and its previous promise "One Country, Two Systems" for Hong Kong has not been kept. China expressed in 2017 that the Joint Declaration was simply a "historical document that no longer had any practical significance," dismissing it altogether as a valid international treaty.¹²⁰ All in all, Hong Kong is a "democracy that might never come."¹²¹

Unlike Deng's promise that Hong Kong's "capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years," Hong Kong's way of life has changed in a fundamental way, particularly since the 2010s. Time after time, the differences between a large segment of the Hong Kong population and the Hong Kong government could not be resolved in a satisfactory manner.

Chinese leadership, directly or indirectly through the Hong Kong government, has issued legal rulings that disqualified democratically elected legislators, kidnapped booksellers and businessmen, suppressed press and academic freedoms, expelled foreign journalists, jailed prominent dissidents, and used disproportionate and often violent measures against largely-peaceful protestors. Furthermore, not only has Chinese leadership repeatedly misjudged and mishandled the situations in Hong Kong, it has blamed the West, particularly the U.S., for the unfolding crisis in Hong Kong, indicating their misguided perception and lack of responsibility.¹²²

¹²⁰ "China says Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong no longer has meaning", *Reuters*, June 30, 2017. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hongkong-anniversary-china/china-says-sino-british-joint-declaration-on-hong-kong-no-longer-has-meaning-idUSKBN19L1J1>

¹²¹ Hgok, Ma, *Political Development in Hong Kong: State, Political Society, and Civil Society*, Hong Kong University press, 2007, P. 225.

¹²² Nathan, Andrew, "How China Sees the Hong Kong Crisis, The Real Reasons Behind Beijing's Restraint", *Foreign Affairs*, September 30, 2019.

Most Taiwanese have always been skeptical about Chinese leadership in general, and the leadership's proposed model of "One Country, Two Systems" for Taiwan in particular. The events in Hong Kong, first began in the 2010s and culminating in 2020, have simply *proven* many Taiwanese's skepticism well-founded. In turn, it suggests that Taiwan's rejection of China's proposed model of "One Country, Two Systems" has been a prudent one. There is an inherent and irreconcilable incompatibility between China's authoritarian political system and Taiwan's liberal legal institution. Furthermore, the lessons learned provide that, in dealing with China's current leadership, Taiwanese leadership must always remain vigilant. Any and all proposals from Chinese leadership should be met with a healthy degree of skepticism until Chinese leadership can convince the international community that, as former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously said about the reform-minded CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, it is a leadership that others can "do business with."

- Taiwan's Dilemmas and Uncertain Future

The first dilemma facing Taiwan is having to work around or with Chinese leadership that will likely remain unreliable and oppressive. China plays an important role with Taiwan both economically and socially. China is Taiwan's biggest trading partner and home to over a million or more Taiwanese living and working there. With Chinese leadership's increasingly tight control over its own economy and society, it is virtually impossible for Taiwan to deal with China only economically and socially without being embroiled in difficult political landmines.

The second dilemma facing Taiwan is the delicate balance of power implicated in the triangular U.S-China-Taiwan relationship. Taiwan's relationship with both countries will likely

continue to operate as a subset of the U.S.-China superpower relationship and competition. Given the primarily competitive nature of the U.S.-China relationship, it will remain difficult for Taiwan to stay neutral that some in Taiwan have been advocating. As a result, Taiwan may have to choose to take sides with or lean toward either superpower. Because the U.S. will likely seek to position Taiwan closer to its oversight for strategic and ideological reasons, including for counterbalancing China, the U.S. will likely continue to offer Taiwan military and economic assistance so long as it does not severely undermine its “One China Policy” framework.

Taiwan’s short-term goal should be to reduce the growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and maintain the status quo “peace.” Any belligerent military threats should be deterred effectively. Taiwan is not well-positioned to deter China, so it will have to partner closely with the U.S. because the success of any viable deterrence policy will rely heavily on U.S. policy. The U.S. policy of *deterrence and assurance* has been capable of sustaining this “peace” for decades. Given its history, a stronger application of this approach should remain a sensible option.

Taiwan can play an important role in these dynamics. China is a primary and conditional revisionist that considers Taiwan’s official independence the primary determining condition. Therefore, Taiwanese leadership can continue to emphasize its desire to maintain the status quo “peace,” and that Taiwan is already an independent country, so it has no plans to pursue official independence. This will allow Chinese leadership to better deal with the zealous nationalism in China favoring a hardline position toward Taiwan. Taiwan’s mid- and long-term goals, however, will largely depend on the direction in which the triangular relationship will unfold in the future, particularly the all-important U.S.-China relationship that drives the triangular relationship. Three possible scenarios can be drawn as follows:

- *First Scenario, the U.S./China Relationship Staying the Course:* The U.S. and China compete against each other in general and even confront each other in such areas as technology and trade, but they sometimes cooperate in a few issues, including climate change and counterterrorism. The U.S.-Taiwan relationship will continue to stay warm, albeit inconspicuously, and will likely stay within the U.S. "One China Policy" framework.
- *Second Scenario, the U.S./China Relationship Shifting Toward More Competition and Confrontation:* If China continues to be aggressive on multiple fronts surrounding the Taiwan Strait, and Taiwan stays non-provocative, then the prospect of warming up of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship will grow even further. The U.S. may gradually shift away from its "One China Policy," which can lead to more international space and respect for Taiwan, and even official recognition of Taiwan from the U.S. This will be welcomed by many but also objected by some in Taiwan, particularly those who favor maintaining the status quo and neutrality. This once unthinkable policy shift will further deteriorate the Taiwan-China relationship and escalate the conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, this scenario can entail significant benefits as well as greater risks for Taiwan.
- *Third Scenario, the U.S./China Relationship Shifting Back to More Cooperation and Less Confrontation:* The U.S. and China may decide to chart out a path for more cooperation and less confrontation. The U.S-China relationship will stabilize and improve gradually. Over time, Chinese leadership may become less authoritarian, less aggressive, and less revisionist about the Taiwan Strait. Meanwhile, the prospect of warming up of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship will decrease accordingly, which will encourage Taiwan to remain as

neutral as possible to either superpower. Therefore, this scenario can entail fewer benefits but also fewer risks for Taiwan.

From the 2020s onward, it appears that the first and second scenarios are more likely given China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy and oppressive agenda. Xi has abolished his term limits, chosen not to designate a successor, and plans to stay in power beyond 2022. The U.S.-China relationship is likely to remain primarily competitive or even confrontational, with occasional cooperation, in the years to come. Regardless, Taiwan's mid-term goal should focus on strengthening its military and economic power. Since the imbalance of military power between China and Taiwan is palpable, Taiwan should continue to drive its "Overall Defense Concept" (ODC) policy with support from the U.S. to deter and defeat the invading forces asymmetrically.¹²³ Taiwan's primary military objective is likely no longer winning an all-out war with China in the Taiwan Strait, but to defend itself from further encroachments from China. The defense becomes effective when launching a military attack on Taiwan would impose unacceptably high costs on China. Under this defense policy, Taiwan will likely purchase advanced reconnaissance systems and low-cost and mobile defense systems with sea mines, among others. Instead of expensive and offensive items such as advanced aircrafts, Taiwan should focus mainly on more affordable and practical items that make more military sense for Taiwan. Furthermore, Taiwan needs to form a de facto strategic alliance with other democracies, such as the U.S., Japan, South Korea, Australia, and India against China.

¹²³ Lee, Hsi-min, Eric Lee, "Taiwan's Overall Defense Concept, Explained", *The Diplomat*, November 3, 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/taiwans-overall-defense-concept-explained/>

Economically, Taiwan needs to strengthen its economy with the U.S. through a free trade agreement with the U.S. and other regional partners. Politically, unless a dramatic shift occurs with the U.S. from the "One China Policy," Taiwan should remain patient to make policy adjustments accordingly.

Taiwan's long-term goal, on the other hand, should be about resolving its underlying conflict with China and seeking a long-lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan, along with the U.S., needs to convince China that a military solution is unacceptably costly and dangerous, particularly to the leadership's own survival, and therefore that a diplomatic settlement is a much more preferable option. Although this more pragmatic approach will be tested early by China's "One China Principle" and nationalism, such difficulties will need to be addressed with sound diplomacy and deterrence. This is particularly important considering that China's "One Country, Two Systems" implemented in Hong Kong will indeed be unworkable in Taiwan.

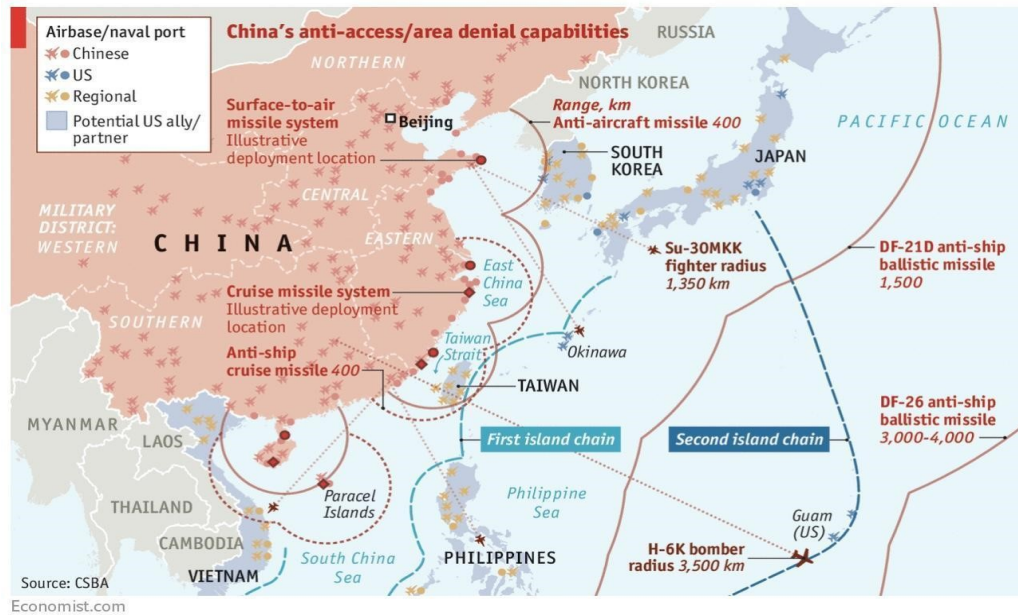
In order for this pragmatic solution to emerge as a viable path, Chinese leadership needs to control the aggressive aspect of Chinese nationalism and fundamentalism that existed in China since the mid-1990s. This belligerent type of Chinese nationalism is disruptive because it strongly supports a hardline and inflexible stance on the U.S.-led democratic alliance and Taiwan. Taiwan has developed a liberal democratic model that has proven successful for its people and earned respect of the international community. As Taiwan continues to garner more respect and success through its cosmopolitan style of development, it can also serve as an additional layer of deterrence against China's aggression, contributing to the long-lasting peace. Absent these preconditions, both ongoing and future conflicts between China and Taiwan will likely render the ultimate goal of long-lasting peace an elusive one.

3. The United States

A. Why Can't the U.S. Simply Give up on Taiwan and Not Get Involved?

A third major factor in shifting the status quo in the Taiwan Strait is the U.S. 's evolving Taiwan Strait policy. But why can't the U.S. simply give up on Taiwan and not get involved in the Taiwan Strait? Taiwan, due to its central location and strategic role as the U.S. Pacific first island chain, presents a critical geopolitical value to the U.S. Ever since the U.S. and China began engaging in an increasingly intense strategic and ideological competition on multiple fronts, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, Taiwan, a democratic and Chinese speaking country also provides an important ideological value to the U.S.

Taiwan occupies an important location in the middle of the first island chain of the U.S., and it has been China's foe and the de-facto ally of the U.S. since 1949. Abandoning a key de facto ally such as Taiwan would seriously undermine the U.S.'s defensive position and credibility to other allies in the region such as South Korea and Japan. Also, Taiwan's democracy, free market economy, and support for universal values such as freedom of speech and the rule of law, in stark contrast to authoritarian China, elicits strong support from the U.S. However, some are concerned that strong ties between the U.S. and Taiwan may serve to encourage Taiwan's official independence and intensify U.S. rivalry with China. Others are concerned that Taiwan is being used as a "pawn" by the U.S. in a superpower rivalry with China.



<https://www.economist.com/special-report/2018/01/25/the-odds-on-a-conflict-between-the-great-powers>

Nevertheless, the long-standing U.S. and Taiwan de-facto alliance appears durable, particularly if China and the U.S. continue on their competitive race against each other, and China remains aggressive toward Taiwan. Overall, as U.S.-China competition intensified drastically in the late 2010s, U.S.-Taiwan relations have been bolstered unprecedentedly. In this regard, the four main factors that drive U.S. efforts to fortify its relations with Taiwan are: (1) tug-of-war between China and the U.S. to alter or sustain the status quo in the Taiwan Strait; (2) Taiwan's strategic geopolitical value for the U.S. to counterbalance China's advances; (3) Taiwan's democracy, free market economy, and support for international norms are valued by U.S. leadership; and (4) strategic assessment by the U.S. that its de-facto alliance with Taiwan imposes additional costs and pressure on China.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Taiwan's Tsai administration has made continuous efforts to remain a predictable, cooperative partner for the U.S.

¹²⁴ Sutter, Robert, "The US and Taiwan Embrace Despite China's Objections, But Will it Last?" *Pacific Forum*, PacNet #58, November 12, 2019 <https://mailchi.mp/pacforum/pacnet-58-the-us-and-taiwan?e=dece426278>

On the contrary, some of the main concerns regarding the U.S.-Taiwan partnership or alliance can be summarized as follows: (1) improved ties between the two countries will intensify the rivalry between the U.S. and China; (2) U.S.-China tensions over Taiwan will upset U.S. allies in the region; (3) Taiwanese leaders may leverage greater U.S. support to move provocatively toward official independence; and (4) China's rising power could prompt strong Chinese reactions.¹²⁵

As a result, some U.S. scholars and policy makers have advocated curtailed U.S. commitment to Taiwan to reduce tensions with China. This proposed "grand bargain" between the U.S. and China is that the U.S. would end its commitment to Taiwan in exchange for China's acceptance of the U.S.'s security presence in East Asia. Proponents of this view argue, controversially, that the proposal would reduce the key conflict, namely Taiwan, between the U.S. and China and increase trust between the two superpowers.¹²⁶ Opponents of this "grand bargain" proposal consider the proposal difficult to enforce, damaging to the reputation of the U.S., and dangerous for the Taiwan Strait as it will likely produce a destabilizing effect on the Taiwan Strait.¹²⁷

Also, a small number of U.S. and a large number of Chinese officials, scholars, and policymakers argue for a view that the U.S. needs to reconsider or abandon its "unsustainable" commitment to Taiwan. They argue the U.S.'s commitment to Taiwan will be increasingly and

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Chen, Ping-Kuei, Scott L. Kastner, William L. Reed, "A Farewell to Arms? US Security Relations with Taiwan and the Prospects for Stability in the Taiwan Strait" in Dittmer, Lowell (Editor), *Taiwan and China, Fitful Embrace*, University of California Press, October 2017, P. 223.

¹²⁷ Chen, Ping-Kuei, "A Farewell to Arms? US Security Relations with Taiwan and the Prospects for Stability in the Taiwan Strait" P. 223-224.

eventually unsustainable since (1) Taiwan is China's (and not the U.S.'s) "core interest"; (2) Chinese pressure on Taiwan and economic and military power will only continue to grow to a level at which the U.S. will not be able to match and (3) the U.S. will no longer be able to afford or find it worthwhile to defend Taiwan from China, and Taiwan will eventually succumb to China's aggression.¹²⁸

Opponents of this "unsustainable" view argue: (1) Taiwan is a significant U.S. interest especially in the context of the U.S.-China rivalry in which the U.S. will be able to contain China¹²⁹; (2) despite China's significant economic and military power, China's growth is slowing down and it may be vulnerable to an economic crisis, and the U.S. will likely remain the dominant player in the region; and (3) China's rigid, unsustainable leadership and political system will undergo an internal transition, which will allow Taiwan to operate more independently from China's control. Overall, as of early 2020s, China and the U.S. appear to continue on their competitive race for the foreseeable future, and China remains aggressive toward Taiwan. The long-standing U.S. and Taiwan de-facto alliance has warmed up and appears durable.

¹²⁸ John J. Mearsheimer argues that the U.S.'s security commitment to Taiwan will be increasingly unsustainable, and Taiwan's options are limited in his famous article "Say Goodbye to Taiwan", *The National Interest*, February 2, 2014, <https://nationalinterest.org/article/say-goodbye-taiwan-9931>. However, he seems to have backtracked his position somewhat in 2015 when he met Tsai Ing-Wen, DPP's Chairwoman at the time who was later elected Taiwan's president in 2016. He is reported as saying, "The U.S. should neither 'say goodbye to Taiwan' nor give up on Taiwan". See "DPP Chairwoman Meets 'Taiwan's Dire Straits' author in Chicago", *Taiwan News*, June 2, 2015. <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/2747743>. More recently, Mearsheimer thinks the U.S. will and will be able to contain China. See "Mearsheimer: 'The US Won't Tolerate China As Peer Competitor'", *DW*, September 23, 2020. <https://www.dw.com/en/chinas-rise-and-conflict-with-us/a-55026173>

¹²⁹ Ibid.

B. U.S. Policy Toward China

The relationship between the U.S. and China, the two countries with the largest economy and military capabilities on the globe, has emerged as the single most important international relationship in the world by the early 21st Century. While the evolution of this complicated relationship is beyond the scope of this study, it explores U.S. policy toward China in the context of the Taiwan Strait, followed by an overview of U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

- Engagement and Hedging

From the 1990s to the mid to late-2010s, U.S. policy (strategy, tactic, or paradigm as labeled by some) toward China has generally been that of “engagement.” It broadly means defining a shared vision for the future of their relationship, continuous dialogue at various levels, promotion of greater economic and societal interdependence, and integrating China into the U.S.-led international order, as exemplified by China’s entry into the World Trade Organization in 2000.¹³⁰ This engagement policy was designed to cultivate a Chinese commitment to the U.S.-dominated liberal order and, ultimately, to liberalize or even democratize China’s political system. The George H.W. Bush administration openly followed and encouraged the engagement policy, as did Clinton and successive administrations.

¹³⁰ Harding, Harry, “The U.S. and China From Partners to Competitors” to be included in Evan S. Medeiros (ed.), *Managing Competition: Rethinking U.S.-China Relations in the 21st Century*, to be published by Georgetown University Press. This is a revised version of a paper originally presented to a conference marking the fortieth anniversary of the normalization of U.S.-China relations at the Carter Center in January 2019. The author is deeply grateful to Professor Harding’s generosity of sharing this essay.

However, the U.S.-China relations have deteriorated steadily and turned competitive over time.¹³¹ The deterioration can be attributed to the two countries' glaring differences, such as fundamentally different cultures, values, interests, worldviews with particular respect to China's place in the world, and visions about international organizations and norms. Even in areas where these differences do not and should not affect as much as other areas of concern, such as climate change, public health, and counterterrorism, the U.S. and China have disagreed frequently on how to cooperate. As a consequence, by the early 2010s, the U.S. adjusted its "engagement" policy to one that "engages China while hedging other possibilities," particularly in strategic areas such as Northeast Asia, the South China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait.¹³² This revised engagement and hedging strategy, while continuing to engage and integrate China into the international system, added a component to "develop military capabilities to deter, dissuade, and defeat Chinese hostility."¹³³ Engagement was only one part of this two-prong "engage and hedge" strategy adopted by the U.S. in response to the rise of China and the growing conflict with China.

- Failure of Engagement

After serving as the U.S.' primary approach to its foreign policy toward China for at least two decades, the "engagement" policy was regarded, by the mid-2010s, as a *partial or complete failure*.¹³⁴ Most U.S. analysts and policymakers agree that it has been a failure but disagree on the extent of this perceived failure. Some go as far as claiming that it has been *one of the worst*

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Denmark, Abraham M. "Asia's Security and the Contested Global Commons", *Strategic Asia, 2010-2011*, National Bureau of Asian Research, September 15, 2010.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ See Campbell, Kurt M., Ely Ratner, "The China Reckoning, How Beijing Defied American Expectations, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-02-13/china-reckoning>

or the single worst failure in modern U.S. foreign policymaking.¹³⁵¹³⁶ All in all, “engagement” proved overly optimistic due to the following reasons: (1) consistent resistance by Chinese leadership to counterbalance U.S. influence to loosen its monopoly of power and to liberalize China; (2) economic freedom did not lead to political freedom; and (3) even if economic freedom does sometimes lead to political freedom, the type of engagement strategy toward China employed by the U.S. did not assert enough pressure to pursue liberalization and democratization.

Whether the U.S. policy of engagement is one of the worst foreign policy failures or not, it is full of colorful and at times personal stories at the leadership level which provide valuable lessons for policymakers and scholars of today. The interactions between George H.W. Bush of the U.S. and Deng Xiaoping of China are particularly instructive. They capture the nature of the U.S.-China relationship, often concealed in a false atmosphere of cooperation. This case offers insights and lessons for future generations of scholars, officials, and policymakers in guiding the U.S.’ approach to dealing and working with China in the future.

U.S. President George H.W. Bush considered himself an old China hand. For him, China had always been a special place. He served as a bomber pilot in the Pacific theater during the Second World War, fighting the Japanese when China was an ally of the U.S. “Like his mentor Richard Nixon, George Bush Senior wanted to improve Sino-American relations as a potential counterweight to the Soviets and, also like Nixon, he considered himself an expert on the

¹³⁵ Blackwill, Robert D, “Trump’s Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem”, Council of Foreign Affairs, April 2019, P .9-10. [https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR%2084 Blackwill Trump 0.pdf](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR%2084%20Blackwill%20Trump%200.pdf)

¹³⁶ O'Brien, Robert C. “How China Threatens American Democracy” Foreign Affairs, October 21, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-10-21/how-china-threatens-american-democracy>

country.”¹³⁷ He served for about a year from 1973-1974 as the Head of the U.S. Liaison Office in China, the de facto U.S. Ambassador to China, as China began to emerge on the international scene. He cultivated firsthand understanding of China and its values. Most importantly, he developed a friendship with Deng Xiaoping, the de facto leader of China at the time. “‘I’d love to return to China before Deng leaves office entirely.’ . . . ‘I feel I have a special relationship there.’”¹³⁸ The term, *lao pengyou* in Chinese, meaning an old friend, had a particular meaning, applied only to influential foreigners with long experience of working with the Chinese. Bush himself was proud to be called one and said, “I take this whole relationship very personally.”¹³⁹ A Bush scholar, Jeffrey Engel, has noted that the president's "near monopolization of China policy during the first real crisis [referring to the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989] of his administration stands in sharp contrast to the more diffuse managerial style he typically employed.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Spohr, Kristina, David Reynolds, *Transcending the Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, and the Dissolution of Bipolarity in Europe, 1970–1990*, P. 182.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 183.

¹³⁹ It is not clear Bush is referring to the relationship with China or Deng specifically. Bush, George H.W., and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, Sep 07, 1999, P. 105.

¹⁴⁰ Engel, Jeffrey A, "A Better World . . . but Don't Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H.W. Bush Twenty Years On," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 37-38.



U.S. President George H.W. Bush exchanges a toast with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Photo: AP

Of course, Bush was not naive about Chinese leadership, but judging the direction in which U.S. foreign policy unfolded during his term, it appears that he allowed his personal feelings to affect his dealings with Deng and China after 1989. After interacting with Chinese leadership for years, he later noted that “I do have a relationship there; there is warmth,” he explained. ‘But those kinds of welcomes, those over-the-top words, they’re for show; it’s what they do.’”¹⁴¹ It is likely that President Bush overestimated his personal relationship with Deng, whom Bush considered an old friend, and he underestimated the regime’s determination to cling to its power, ideology and rigid nationalism. If he thought Deng was an old friend, Deng certainly did not treat him as one. The day after the July 4, 1989 Tiananmen crackdown of the democracy movement, President Bush, under pressure from Congress and other Western leaders, announced the imposition of modest sanctions as an expression of U.S. disapproval of the

¹⁴¹ Spohr, *Transcending the Cold War: Summits, Statecraft, and the Dissolution of Bipolarity in Europe, 1970–1990*, P. 186.

violence taking place in Beijing. At the same time, “Bush attempted to telephone Deng Xiaoping to explain that the moral sentiments of the American people made unavoidable some expression of US displeasure. This was the first time an U.S. president has attempted a direct telephone call to a Chinese leader.”¹⁴²

However, Deng refused to take Bush’s call. Having failed to reach Deng by telephone on June 5, Bush sent him a handwritten letter on June 21 stating his firm conviction of good relations between China and the U.S., and proposing to send a representative on a secret mission to Beijing in July, just after six weeks since the Tiananmen crackdown.¹⁴³ Bush’s calculation rested on the premise that preserving the relations, particularly the economic relations between the U.S. and China, would be beneficial for both countries in the long run. After the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, Bush could only preserve relations with China through backchannels, which he maintained throughout his tenure. Bush hoped that this continuum of relationship with China alongside the international community may pave the way for democracy in China: “I believed that the commercial contacts between our countries had helped lead to the quest for more freedom. If people have commercial incentives, whether it's in China or in other totalitarian systems, the move to democracy becomes inexorable. For this reason, I wanted to avoid cutting off the entire commercial relationship. Instead, I decided to suspend military sales and contacts.”¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, the U.S. press and Congress lobbied for a much tougher approach because they did

¹⁴² Garver, John W. *China’s Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations for the People’s Republic of China*, Oxford University Press, 2016, P. 498.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Bush, George H.W., and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, Sep 07, 1999, P. 89.

not find Bush's conciliatory line acceptable, instead favoring a much more openly, punitive route.¹⁴⁵

Meanwhile, China expected "no real countermeasures" from the Bush administration, which likely lowered the costs and risks on China in taking a military action. The CCP was accurate in its assessment of what the U.S. response would be, and whether President Bush chose a wise course of action is debatable. Supporters of his China policy claim that the U.S. had only a few means of shaping events inside China, so the "preservation of an important relationship was the only realistic option[.]" Opponents of his policy, however, counter that the White House deprived "the U.S. of a potential source of leverage" by signaling clearly to Beijing that it had nothing to worry about from Washington"¹⁴⁶ In turn, Deng underestimated the negative response from the international community for its use of military force in squashing the Tiananmen Square protests. Shortly before June 4, Deng told his Politburo members that "international negative reaction to the use of military force to re-establish control could last a mere few months and dissipate." In fact, "the moral onus of the Beijing Massacre would continue to nag China for decades."¹⁴⁷

After the June 1989 event, the Bush administration was strongly criticized for its handling of relations with China. Bush "spent more time and far more space in his memoir reaching out to the Communist dictators in China who had murdered their pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989, than to the Communist reformer in Moscow who had refused to do so."¹⁴⁸ This was a time

¹⁴⁵ Sarotte, M. E., 'China's Fear of Contagion: Tiananmen Square and the Power of the European Example,' International Security 37/2 (2012), P. 178. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23280417.pdf>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 181.

¹⁴⁷ Garver, John W., *China's Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations for the People's Republic of China*, Oxford University Press, 2016, P. 487.

¹⁴⁸ National Security Archive (NSA): 'Bush and Gorbachev at Malta' [Dec. 1989] (NSA Electronic Briefing Book, No. 298) [47pp] <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB298/>

when U.S. support for the Soviet reformist leader Gorbachev lied more in its appearance than in substance.¹⁴⁹ Conversely, U.S. support for Deng seemed more in substance than in appearance. As New York Times reporter Nicholas Kristof put it, "the White House is subordinating human rights to its friendship with Beijing."¹⁵⁰ Rumors reportedly circulated "on China's oral network of 'alleyway news'" describing "a Deng Xiaoping who gloats over his ability to manipulate naive American presidents."¹⁵¹ Evaluating the Bush administration's response to the Tiananmen crackdown, a leading China expert Orville Schell opined that "Bush et al. deported themselves in a manner so supplicating, so disconnected from what had just occurred, one might think the U.S. not China was the offending and inferior power. But I also felt grudging admiration for Bush's commitment to keeping a channel open...Bush bent over backwards to show deference. He flogged his "friendship" with Deng, begged Beijing to remember the critical nature of "the relationship." . . . One can fault Bush for giving too much too soon or even for making America responsible for ceding ground to "save the relationship"—a posture that would endure through subsequent decades.¹⁵²

Was Bush giving too much too soon to China after 1989 just to "save the relationship" between the two countries? After the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, Bush sought to preserve relations with China through backchannels, which arguably allowed China to grow economically and continue its political oppression. Bush continued "engagement" with China, which the U.S.

¹⁴⁹ Zubok, Vladislav, 'With His Back against the Wall: Gorbachev, Soviet Demise, and German Unification', CWH 14/4 (2014), 619-45. <https://ares.library.jhu.edu/ares/ares.dll?Action=10&Type=10&Value=625720>

¹⁵⁰ Sarotte, P. 177.

¹⁵¹ Link, Perry, *Evening Chats in Beijing*, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1993, pp. 302-3.

¹⁵² Schell, Orville, The Other Tiananmen Papers, A ChinaFile Conversation, July 8, 2019. <https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/other-tiananmen-papers>

has continued to maintain following his administration. If the “engagement” policy towards China has been a failure, is Bush at least partly responsible for its failure? Is Bush partly responsible for the existence of China’s highly authoritarian government today? No, for China, and not any U.S. president including Bush senior, should be responsible for China’s government. However, Bush did seem to have miscalculated after the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989 by overestimating his personal relationship with Deng and underestimating the Chinese regime’s determination to cling to its power. He did not have to go out of his way to show deference to the regime that violently suppressed the pro-democracy demonstrators. Although Bush was hardly alone in his approach, his faith in the engagement strategy and “that markets and trade ineluctably would lead to more open societies has held up poorly over the ensuing three decades, especially under Xi Jinping and his increasingly militant “China Dream.”¹⁵³

- Failures of the Failure of Engagement¹⁵⁴

Some analysts, on the other hand, have argued that the type of “engagement” policy adopted by the U.S. has never been the type that would induce China to change politically.¹⁵⁵ The “engagement” policy inducing China to liberalize and democratize has never been a priority of the U.S. They claim that human rights and democratization have never been a “prominent element in the practice of U.S. engagement policy, and little external pressure has been applied.” – counter to what Bill Clinton at least claimed[.]¹⁵⁶ Engagement should at least encourage political

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Johnston, Alastair Iain, “The Failures of the ‘Failure of Engagement’ with China”. *Washington Quarterly*, 42(2):99–114, 2019.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 103.

freedom, but the type of engagement various U.S. presidents followed would unlikely lead to political freedom. The fact that China did not become a liberal democracy is not the failure of the policy. Chinese society and economy did become more open in many ways and “purposeful diplomatic engagement with the Chinese government has, in fact, brought benefits to the peace, security, and prosperity of the U.S.”¹⁵⁷

This “engagement” policy also rests on the counterfactual claim that, had the U.S. never adopted the policy, the U.S. would have been better off because it would have been better prepared to compete with or contain China earlier. Without “engagement,” however, the U.S. would likely have faced a “hostile, nuclear-armed China alienated from a range of international institutions and norms, kept global markets, and with limited societal/cultural exchanges.”¹⁵⁸ Then, was there a better strategy than “engagement”?¹⁵⁹

The answer is not clear, but the “engagement” policy clearly has not been effective since it has failed to serve, and arguably worked against, the interests of the U.S.¹⁶⁰ The policy has

¹⁵⁷ Green, James, “In Defense of Diplomacy with China”, China File, September 10, 2020, <https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/defense-of-diplomacy-china>

¹⁵⁸ Johnston, Alastair Iain, “The Failures of the ‘Failure of Engagement’ with China”, P. 109.

¹⁵⁹ With the benefit of hindsight, “engagement” seems overly accommodating to Chinese leadership and allowed it not to play by the rules consistent with international norms and universal values. A few analysts had predicted the U.S.-China rivalry and advocated a more hardline approach to China, an approach criticized by some in the U.S. and subjected to attacks by the Chinese media over the year would probably be the better approach. See <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/capsule-review/1997-05-01/coming-conflict-china> and <http://www.munrolink.com/aboutrm.html>

¹⁶⁰ Mann, James, *The China Fantasy: How Our Leaders Explain Away Chinese Repression*, 2007. Mann points out in this book, the mainstream of the U.S. foreign policy establishment on China continues to believe what he calls the “soothing scenario,” which argues that the rapid economic growth combined with increasing wealth in China will eventually bring liberalization and democracy to China. He contends that responsible U.S. foreign policymakers should eschew this scenario because it is very likely that its basic prediction about the onset of democracy in China will not be realized in the near future. Instead, China will continue to grow stronger and richer, but it will not change its basic political system in any fundamental way. Therefore, the U.S. needs to act quickly. The book was published in 2007.

largely failed to change China's direction or at least alter its aggressive behavior, let alone leading China to democratize and liberalize. Although the Chinese society and economy have become more modern and freer in many respects, China clearly has not moved an inch closer to a liberal democracy. China was ruled by authoritarian leadership before the "engagement" policy to begin with, but it is now controlled by a much more powerful authoritarian leadership, partly due to the "engagement." Therefore, the consensus in Washington is that the outdated policy needs to be upgraded or replaced outright, particularly at a time when China and the U.S. are constantly engaging in intensifying competition and confrontation.

What is the realistic objective of the U.S. policy toward China? It is to at least influence China's behavior to be more consistent with international rules and norms. An increasingly authoritarian and powerful China is dangerous to the liberal and democratic international order. While a well-defined, updated U.S. China policy has not been formulated with clarity, there has been broad acceptance in Washington that the U.S. should stand for values of the liberal order characterized by freedom and democracy against China's oppressive authoritarianism and rigid nationalism. Scholars and policymakers in Washington, liberals and conservatives alike, agree that "competition with China requires a vision of the norms, values, and regional order for which the US stands . . . a set of values and goals for the region focused on good governance, transparency, openness, the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms."¹⁶¹ Former U.S. National Security Adviser and a renowned historian H.R. McMaster believes that "[t]he CCP has no intention of playing by the rules associated with international law, trade, or commerce.

¹⁶¹ Harold, Scott W., Winning the ideological competition with China, The ASAN Forum, March - April 2020 Vol.8, No.2. <http://www.theasanforum.org/winning-the-ideological-competition-with-china/>

China's overall strategy relies on co-option and coercion . . . as well as on concealing the nature of China's true intentions. What makes this strategy potent and dangerous is the integrated nature of the party's efforts across government, industry, academia, and the military."¹⁶² Moreover, it is widely accepted that China has been infiltrating and influencing U.S. Congress, state and local governments, the Chinese American communities, universities, think tanks, media, corporations, and technology and research institutions.¹⁶³ China's ideological advances to the U.S. appear to be more widespread and extensive than commonly believed.¹⁶⁴

Furthermore, as China continues its aggressive and hardline advances, particularly since the late 2010s, the U.S. has sought to respond with an incoherent strategy toward China.¹⁶⁵¹⁶⁶ A more coherent and effective U.S. policy toward China is in dire need, especially given China's increasingly offensive stance on multiple fronts. Facing an increasingly authoritarian and aggressive style of Chinese leadership, the U.S. must revise its "engage and hedge" strategy and adopt a proper mix of tough and soft tactics toward China, and not repeat the mistakes made by the previous administrations.

¹⁶² McMaster, H.R., "How China Sees the World, and How We Should See China", The Atlantic, May 2020. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2020/05/mcmaster-china-strategy/609088/>

¹⁶³ "Chinese Influence & American Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance" Hoover Institution, 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Paskal, Cleo, "Yes, Virginia, the Trump Administration Does Have a China Strategy", The Diplomat, October 24, 2020. https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/yes-virginia-the-trump-administration-does-have-a-china-strategy/?fbclid=IwAR2l_HBXleFM7QVUOQmgkqUzEftOXcnld0s92iK8ZDz_EVuSI3fjY095Pe0

¹⁶⁶ Nathan, Andrew, "What Now?", *China File*, August 5, 2020. <https://www.chinafile.com/conversation/what-now>

- The Long Shadow of Taiwan

Taiwan casts a long shadow over the relationship between the U.S. and China. Both the U.S. and China consider their relationship the single most important international relationship they each have with any other country. At the heart of this all-important relationship is the issue of Taiwan, considered by China one of the most important and sensitive issues.^{167 168} “The three-way relationship among the U.S., China and Taiwan is potentially explosive and figures prominently in the calculus for every U.S. president's China policy.”¹⁶⁹

The U.S. has long supported and recognized the Nationalist government in Taiwan as the legitimate government of China, even after the Communists, who defeated the Nationalists, founded the People's Republic of China in 1949. The Nationalist government, having been defeated and fled to Taiwan after 1949, still claimed to represent the entire China and was recognized by much of the world for decades despite controlling only Taiwan. This was possible only because the U.S. government recognized the Nationalist government as a legitimate government of China.

However, the split between the Chinese Communists and the Soviets that began in the 1950s set the stage for the U.S. and China to seek a rapprochement, leading to mutual recognition

¹⁶⁷ Romberg, Alan D., *Rein in at the Brink of the Precipice: American Policy Toward Taiwan and US-PRC*, The Henry L. Stimson Center, October 1st 2003, Introduction.

¹⁶⁸ Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020, Annual Report to Congress, A Report to Congress Pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, as Amended, P. 113. <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-DOD-CHINA-MILITARY-POWER-REPORT-FINAL.PDF>

¹⁶⁹ Shih, Gerry, “Taiwan Frets Over How A Biden Administration Would Deal With China” Washington Post, October 30, 2020 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/biden-china-election-taiwan-obama/2020/10/30/44e55488-0868-11eb-8719-0df159d14794_story.html?fbclid=IwAR26ID7qglAOnRZgdaDQ_XvdS-76gfkWR--zmrey2SW4Dv_NDeLwzloTh_Q

between the two countries. U.S. President Richard Nixon was determined to pull the U.S. forces out of the Vietnam War and improve relations with Beijing to pressure North Vietnam. For the U.S., Beijing was no longer the enemy and China played an important role in counterbalancing the Soviet Union and extricating the U.S. from Vietnam. In 1979, the U.S. officially recognized the People's Republic of China government in Beijing as the legitimate government of China and derecognized the Republic of China government in Taipei. Despite the existing mutual official recognition between the U.S. and China, Taiwan remains the key unresolved issue. The U.S. understood China's desire to be treated as an equal and its sense of historical mission to achieve a total civil war victory by unifying Taiwan. China's uncompromising stance on Taiwan, however, still caught the U.S. by surprise.

The U.S.'s recognition of the PRC government in China and derecognition of the ROC government in Taiwan in 1979 resulted in an immediate crisis about Taiwan's future. At stake was not only the relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan, but also Taiwan's own survival itself. Taiwan depended principally on the U.S. militarily, economically, and politically, and it felt abandoned and betrayed by the U.S.'s derecognition. This sentiment was shared by much of the general public in the U.S. as well as many in the U.S. government. In response to the crisis, U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Acts (TRA), signed into law in 1979. Along with the three joint U.S.-China Communiques in 1972, 1979, and 1982 (the U.S.'s "One China Policy"), and supplemented by the Six Assurances in 1982, it formed a solid albeit at times inconsistent, foundation of the U.S. policy in the Taiwan Strait.

Over the last 40 years, the TRA has worked beyond expectations of many and “stands as one of the U.S.’s most durable and successful laws ever established to guide a relationship with any foreign power”.¹⁷⁰ The TRA allowed the U.S. to maintain a substantive, and yet unofficial relationship with Taiwan. The essence of the TRA is that it established Taiwan’s security and an official channel through which the U.S. sold arms to defend Taiwan. This secured Taiwan’s survival and allowed Taiwan to develop its democracy and prosperous economy without provoking China.

At the same time, the U.S.’ commitment and continued selling of arms to Taiwan has been a constant source of tension between the U.S. and China. Taiwan has been a leading customer of U.S. weapons to this day, and with critical assistance from the U.S., has been able to maintain the military balance of power in the Taiwan Strait until the mid-2010s. Since then, however, the military advantage, both quantitatively and qualitatively, has been tipping in favor of China, the trend of which will likely continue in the future. However, the U.S. has been upgrading its sales of arms to Taiwan based on the TRA to address and reduce the further imbalance of military power.¹⁷¹

In addition to the TRA, the U.S. has made inconsistent gestures of commitment in the Taiwan Strait through the three joint U.S.-China Communiques signed in 1972, 1979, and 1982 and the Six Assurances issued in 1982 (declassified in 2020). The three Communiques are more

¹⁷⁰ Keegan, David J. “The Taiwan Relations Act: Still Essential in Changing Times”, The Wilson Center, March 2014, P. 1. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-taiwan-relations-act-still-essential-changing-times>

¹⁷¹ The U.S.’s Taiwan Assurance Act of 2020, was signed into law in late December 2020 to support Taiwan's defense capacity by normalizing sales of arms and Taiwan’s international participation. See “Taiwan Assurance Act to Give Flexibility to U.S. Arms Sales”, *Focus Taiwan*, December 28, 2020. <https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/202012280020>

favorable to China because they were based partly on China's perspective. Chinese leadership has used these Communiques to strengthen its legitimacy and sovereignty over Taiwan. The intention to normalize relations between the U.S. and China was set forth in the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué. The normalization of relations was then announced in the second communiqué in 1979, in which the U.S. "acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China." This language specifically expressed the U.S. position that it *acknowledges* the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China. This second communiqué also stated that the U.S. *recognizes* (does not merely acknowledge) that "the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China," but it will maintain "cultural, commercial and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan." The third communiqué, issued in 1982, stated a conditional pledge of the U.S. to gradually decrease both the quantity and quality of arms sales to Taiwan.

Although the U.S. 's "One China Policy" does echo China's political doctrine of "One China Principle", the Policy contains a critical distinction from the Principle, the U.S. Policy acknowledges (not recognizes) China's position that Taiwan is part of China, the essence of the Principle. Also, the U.S. insists that the dispute between China and Taiwan be resolved peacefully. "The U.S. concern for peaceful resolution is emphasized in all three Joint Communiques, the Taiwan Relations Action, and U.S. policy since then. In a sense, the U.S. 'One China Policy' might be better called the U.S. 'Cross-Strait Peaceful Resolution Policy.'"¹⁷²

¹⁷² Keegan, David J., "US-China Economic and Security Review Commission Hearing on 'Deterring PRC Aggression Toward Taiwan'", Written Testimony P. 6, February 18, 2021.
https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/David_Keegan_Testimony.pdf

China has interpreted that the U.S. in the second communique signed in 1979 has *recognized* that Taiwan is part of China. The U.S., on the other hand, has clearly stated in the second communique that it merely *acknowledges* (*not recognizes*) the Chinese position. However, the U.S. has also stated that it would not “challenge” China’s position in the second communique. Although the U.S. does not challenge China’s position, the distinction between the word *acknowledge* and the word *recognize* in the Policy is critical because the U.S. policy stops short of fully endorsing or agreeing with China’s position. As a result of this one-word distinction, China’s “One China Principle” and the U.S.’s “One China Policy” do not take the same position on the critical issue of Taiwan’s sovereignty. The U.S. has, once again in 1979, after sending its 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to defend Taiwan in 1950, effectively denied China’s claim of sovereignty over Taiwan.¹⁷³ Although the distinction is clear, Chinese leadership and the media often state or imply, either purposefully or not, that the U.S. has agreed to China’s claim of sovereignty over Taiwan.

Further, China has since interpreted the third communique signed in 1982 to mean that the U.S. has made an unconditional commitment to reduce arms sales to Taiwan. On the other hand, the U.S. has always considered any reduction of arms sales as *conditional* on the third communiqué’s subsequent clause emphasizing that both governments “will make every effort to adopt measures and create conditions conducive to the thorough settlement of this issue.” Since China’s military threat to Taiwan increased substantially in subsequent years, the U.S. has not

¹⁷³ The U.S.’s intention seems clear since in the U.S.’s Policy, the word “recognize” is being used somewhere else, but not about China’s claim of sovereignty over Taiwan.

considered “conditions conducive” to reducing arms sales, particularly given the intent of the TRA.¹⁷⁴

Finally, the U.S.’s Six Assurances, about the U.S. commitment to Taiwan, which are more favorable to Taiwan. The Six Assurances are a result of the communications between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), the de facto U.S. Embassy in Taiwan, and Taiwan’s President Chiang Ching-kuo in 1982 shortly before the release of the third communique. They were to provide reassurance that the U.S.-PRC negotiations on the communiqué would not harm Taiwan’s interests. The precise text of the Six Assurances was declassified in 2020.¹⁷⁵ The Six Assurances are that the U.S.:

- Has not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan;
- Has not agreed to consult with the PRC on arms sales to Taiwan;
- Will not play a mediation role between Taipei and Beijing;
- Has not agreed to revise the Taiwan Relations Act;
- Has not altered its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan; and
- Will not exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the PRC.

¹⁷⁴ “Toward a Stronger U.S.-Taiwan Relationship”, Center of Strategic and International Studies, October 21, 2020, P. 6. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/toward-stronger-us-taiwan-relationship>

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

C. The U.S. Policy Toward Taiwan Since the 1980s

As indicated in the aforementioned section, the Taiwan Relations Acts (TRA), the three joint U.S.-China Communiqués which is the U.S.'s "One China Policy," and the Six Assurances collectively formed the foundation of the U.S. policy in the Taiwan Strait to this day. After 1979, when the U.S. established formal diplomatic relations with China, the U.S. nevertheless maintained a strong unofficial relationship with Taiwan. Under the TRA, the U.S. is required to assist Taiwan in defending itself by making defensive weapons available to Taiwan. China continues to claim Taiwan as its sovereign territory, while the U.S. continues to view Taiwan's status as undetermined. This delicate balancing act allowed the U.S. and China to build a peaceful relationship, for the most part, and Taiwan to become a prosperous democracy.

Over time, the U.S. found that it needed to respond to the changing circumstances, including the democratization of Taiwan in the 1980s, the emergence of a Taiwanese identity, a growing Chinese military capability to take Taiwan by force, and pressure for modifications of the U.S. policy. The U.S. has repeatedly emphasized that its "One China Policy" would not support Taiwan's official independence or Taiwan's membership in international organizations whose membership was restricted to sovereign states, and adopt a "two-China" (i.e., a dual recognition policy). However, the U.S. also clarified that it would not place quantitative and qualitative limits on its arms sales to Taiwan.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Harding, Harry, "Change and Continuity in America's Taiwan Policy," presented at a conference on Taiwan and regional integration, SOAS Taiwan Programme, University of London, May 2018, revised for conference volume edited by Robert Ash and Dafydd Fell, pp. 5-6. The author is deeply grateful for Professor Harding's sharing of this article.

As one of the most salient issues in the U.S.-China relations for decades, Taiwan's role has become even more prominent in the increasingly intense U.S.-China rivalry since the late 2010s. Under the highly combative and controversial Trump Administration from 2016 to 2020, the U.S. has quickly reinforced its relationship with Taiwan in an unprecedented manner with a series of Taiwan-friendly legislations passed by Congress. In addition, U.S. President Trump promoted numerous rounds of arms sales consistent with the "One China Policy." However, "some argue for an even closer relationship with Taiwan . . . Supporters of this position see Taiwan as increasingly important in the 'free and open Indo-Pacific region' . . . Others argue that the rise of Chinese military power makes the American commitment to Taiwan's security increasingly costly and risky . . . Still others believe that America's present policy allows enough room for flexibility and that any change in either direction would introduce an undesirable level of uncertainty."¹⁷⁷

- Strategic Ambiguity v. Strategic Clarity

Within its "One China Policy" framework, the U.S. policy toward Taiwan since the 1980s is known as "strategic ambiguity." The ambiguity lies in the U.S.'s intentional vague commitment about when and how it will defend Taiwan militarily if invaded by China unprovoked. As China poses a difficult challenge in the Taiwan Strait, scholars and policymakers in Washington are engaging in a heated debate whether the long-standing "strategic ambiguity" policy is outdated.

¹⁷⁷ Lin, Syaru Shirley, "Xi Jinping's Taiwan Policy and Its Impact on Cross-Strait Relations", *China Leadership Monitor*, June 2, 2019, pp. 7-8. <http://www.shirleylin.net/publicationsblog/2019/6/4/xi-jinpings-taiwan-policy-and-its-impact-on-cross-strait-relations>

“Strategic ambiguity” has been the guiding U.S. policy toward Taiwan since the 1980s, but some U.S. analysts have openly advocated replacing it with “strategic clarity,” a clear and nearly unconditional commitment to defend Taiwan.¹⁷⁸ This change in policy gained support as stronger deterrence against China emerged as the new consensus in Washington by the late 2010s. Other analysts claim this significant change in policy “strategic ambiguity” to “strategic clarity” is counterproductive and may make the Taiwan Strait more unstable.

Proponents of “strategic clarity” argue “strategic ambiguity” has run its course and “ambiguity is unlikely to deter an increasingly assertive China with growing military capabilities. The time has come for the U.S. to introduce a policy of strategic clarity: one that makes explicit that the U.S. would respond to any Chinese use of force against Taiwan unprovoked. Such a policy change should strengthen the US.-China relations in the long term by improving deterrence and reducing the chances of war in the Taiwan Strait.”¹⁷⁹ These analysts argue that “strategic ambiguity” is dangerous because it lacks certainty and predictability. It would be safer if either China or Taiwan, or both know what can and cannot be done and where the red lines are, much like successful, mutual deterrence between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Surprisingly, some policymakers and scholars in both Taiwan and China agree with this assessment and support “strategic clarity,” which both sides believe will make the Taiwan Strait more stable and secure. Under this view, ambiguity is likely to cause misconceptions and

¹⁷⁸ Haass, Richard, David Sacks, “American Support for Taiwan Must Be Unambiguous”, *Foreign Affairs*, September 2, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/american-support-taiwan-must-be-unambiguous?fbclid=IwAR3kr-jROe47RdCJDJ3YolRgH8KE7uaHGSOHtFmvXvRg74gNXjpMom8YWnw>

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

accidents, and clarity is better.¹⁸⁰ In turn, proponents of this approach provide that it can allow both Chinese and Taiwanese leadership to take rational and pragmatic steps.

Opponents of “strategic clarity” who advocate the continued adherence to the long-standing “strategic ambiguity” policy argue that ambiguity has maintained “peace” in the Taiwan Strait and worked remarkably well for the past 40 years. China’s only true fear is Taiwan’s official independence, and there is no imminent danger for such in the Taiwan Strait. Clear red lines are dangerous for both China and Taiwan because both sides can be encouraged to take a series of provocative actions just short of what is perceived as red lines. For example, the Chinese leaders may take further military actions if they know where the red lines are, increasing the chance of a U.S.-China confrontation in the Taiwan Strait. It could also be seen as a blank check for Taiwan, giving it more ammunition to inch closer to declaring official independence. The U.S. “cannot, however, make its willingness to defend Taiwan unconditional. Rather, the U.S. should reserve the latitude to judge whether Taipei’s policies are consistent with U.S. interests—and with the region’s peace and security.”¹⁸¹ These policymakers argue that Chinese leadership is not particularly anxious about Taiwan despite engaging in occasional belligerent statements and military exercises, but they are expected to undergo a sensitive period of transition in the early 2020s. Therefore, according to them, introducing “strategic clarity,” at least in the early 2020s, can be provocative and dangerous.

¹⁸⁰ Yan Xuetong, a well-known Chinese international relations scholar and Chiou I-jen, a key Taiwanese policy maker and a DPP co-founder both agree that “strategic clarity” is better.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Nwpy9s-Pt4&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR1TpMj7xHjBxhe8KJIEvOs8USRDXfDbwrKt-RmoQs2QMwwyWwS7-MJzNo>

¹⁸¹ Glasser, Bonnie S., “Dire Straits Should American Support for Taiwan Be Ambiguous?”, *Foreign Affairs*, September 24, 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-09-24/dire-straits>

However, in the late 2010s, the U.S. appeared to be moving away from “strategic ambiguity” and toward “strategic clarity.” In the early 2020s, the U.S. appears to have stopped short of reaching “clarity” and maintained its existing “ambiguity” policy. During this period, however, the substance of this policy eroded or evolved. This gradual policy shift is a reaction and adjustment to China’s aggressive military stance in the Taiwan Strait and a result of advocating for stronger support for Taiwan. Support for Taiwan in the U.S. has grown steadily due to the escalation of the U.S.-China conflict and respect for Taiwan's vibrant democracy and open civil society. “Beijing’s relentless hostility toward Tsai has raised support in Congress and the Trump administration for rolling back some of the long-standing restrictions on high-level visits — and made Beijing’s objections to new US arms sales ring hollow.”¹⁸² Taiwan’s exemplary handling of the Covid-19 public health crisis and successful Taiwan lobbying in Washington also likely contributed to this policy evolution.

Due to the U.S.’s own complicated relationship and intense competition with China surfaced clearly in the late 2010s. Particularly under the highly combative and controversial Trump Administration, Taiwan’s role became more prominent in the U.S.-China competition. The U.S. has quickly upgraded and reinforced its relationship with Taiwan with a series of unprecedented Taiwan-friendly legislations passed by Congress and several rounds of arms sales to Taiwan consistent with the “One China Policy” of the U.S. The extent to which this U.S. support for Taiwan will change the dynamics in the Taiwan Strait remains to be seen. Most

¹⁸² Templeman, Kharis, “China’s Military Incursions Around Taiwan Aren’t a Sign of Imminent Attack”, *The Diplomat*, October 22, 2020. https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/chinas-military-incursions-around-taiwan-arent-a-sign-of-imminent-attack/?fbclid=IwAR05aIC0OfVljopUuz2cvzNEs-L6KutmcxyWiUmhc_BWiDLUcdz0dzaDY5M

Taiwanese generally want their country to earn the respect of the international community as an independent country with assistance from the U.S. Would the U.S. support re-recognition of the ROC or even go as far as endorsing Taiwan's official independence? Any steps toward such a direction would almost certainly invite more U.S.-China confrontation and Chinese aggression against Taiwan.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Harding, Harry, "Change and Continuity in America's Taiwan Policy," presented at conference on Taiwan and regional integration, SOAS Taiwan Programme, University of London, May 2018, revised for conference volume edited by Robert Ash and Dafydd Fell, P. 9.

Chapter III: The Theory of “Strategic Triangle”, Key Findings of a Survey of Experts, and Policy Recommendations for the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait

1. The Theory of “Strategic Triangle” Explaining the Triangular Relationship Among the United States, Taiwan, and China

- A. Three patterns: the ménage à trois, the stable marriage, and the romantic triangle

The triangular relationship among the U.S., Taiwan, and China is unusual in the international arena and not easily explained through conventional international theories or models.¹⁸⁴ This peculiar triangular relationship in which a lesser power (i.e. Taiwan) is caught between the two great powers (i.e. the U.S. and China) is explained aptly by political scientist Lowell Dittmer’s theory of “strategic triangle.”¹⁸⁵ This theory analyzes the internal logic of the relationship among three parties, and a “strategic triangle” is a sort of highly complex, but not formalized, transactional game among three international parties. The parties may not even be aware that they are playing a game, and may choose to adhere to or disregard its rules at will. Yet, as long as they remain “in the situation described by the game,” their policy options will be “circumscribed by its constraints and opportunities to some degree.”¹⁸⁶ In other words, as long as the parties remain in the game, the choices available to them will be more or less limited by the conditions and rules of the game.

The “strategic triangle” theory is valuable in understanding and explaining the complex triangular relationship of U.S.-Taiwan-China. However, as acknowledged by Dittmer, the

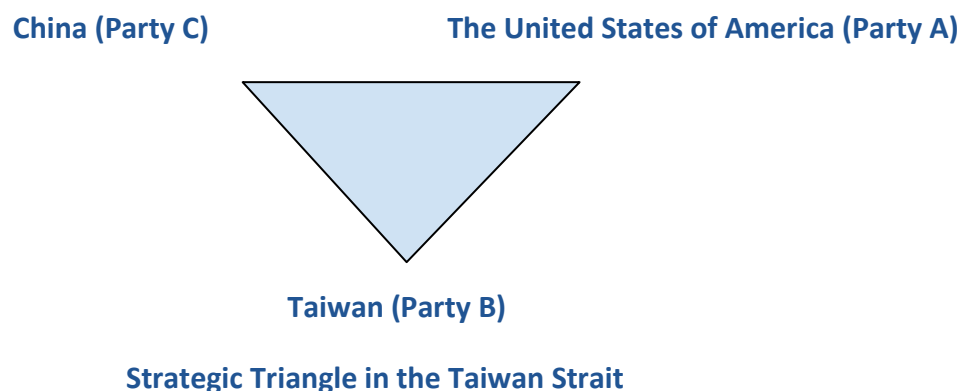
¹⁸⁴ Christensen, Thomas, “The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict” *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002.

¹⁸⁵ Dittmer, Lowell, “The Strategic Triangle: An Elementary Game-Theoretical Analysis.” *World Politics*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1991, pp. 485-515.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 486.

application of the theory “does not incorporate the sort of formal game theory” developed and accepted by many scholars; it is simply an “exploratory venture designed to generate hypotheses and perhaps to stimulate more systematic strategic thinking.”¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, it provides a basic and useful theoretical foundation on this important triangular relationship, which has not been approached from a theoretical way.¹⁸⁸

Based on this theory, a triangular relationship consists of two preconditions and three patterns. The two preconditions are that (1) each party recognizes the strategic condition of the three parties, and that (2) the relationship between any two will be affected by each party's relationship to the third. “Within the triangle, there are three distinct patterns: the ménage à trois, consisting of mutually positive relationships among all three; the stable marriage, consisting of a bilateral relationship excluding the third; and the romantic triangle, consisting of one pivot player playing off two suitors.”¹⁸⁹



¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 485.

¹⁸⁸ Bau, Tzong-Ho, Yu-shan Wu (editors). *Revisiting Theories on Cross-Strait Relations* 《重新檢視爭辯中的兩岸關係理論》, Taipei: IPSAS & Wu Nan Publisher, 2009, Preface. <https://www.ipsas.sinica.edu.tw/article.php?id=970519>

¹⁸⁹ Dittmer, 485. Ménage à trois is an arrangement in which a married couple and the lover of one of them live together. Definitions from Oxford Languages. Actually, there can be a fourth pattern where all three parties are fighting with one another, but it is not applicable to our China/US/Taiwan scenario.

B. Three relationships: China and the U.S., China and Taiwan, and the US and Taiwan

The first and the third patterns, *ménage à trois* and romantic triangle, respectively, are unlikely to happen in the near future. The first pattern, *ménage à trois*, consists of mutually positive peaceful relationships among the three parties. This is the most peaceful and desirable pattern of all. However, it is unlikely due to the rapidly deteriorating relationship since the late 2010s between China (Party C) and the U.S. (Party A), not to mention the strained relationship between China (Party C) and Taiwan (Party B) during the same period.^{190 191} The third pattern, romantic triangle, consisting of one pivot player (presumably the U.S. as Party A, or Taiwan as Party B) playing off two suitors (presumably China and Taiwan as Parties C & B, or China and the U.S. as Parties C & A) is also unlikely due to the same reason.

On the other hand, the second pattern, stable marriage, consisting of a bilateral positive relationship between the U.S. (Party A) and Taiwan (Party B) excluding the third (China, Party C) continues to exist within the U.S.'s "One China Policy" framework. However, this second pattern is generally unstable due to the tension between China (Party C) and the U.S. (Party A), and between China (Party C) and Taiwan (Party B). Moreover, deteriorating relationships among the parties can quickly lead to an escalation.

¹⁹⁰ Foot, Rosemary, King, Amy. "Assessing the deterioration in China–U.S. relations: U.S. governmental perspectives on the economic-security nexus", *China Int Strategy Rev.* 1, 39–50 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-019-00005-y>

¹⁹¹ Visconti, Beatrice, "Cross-Strait Relations - Unification, Deterioration or Reconciliation", European Institute for Asian Studies, May 2, 2019.
<https://www.eias.org/news/cross-strait-relations-unification-deterioration-or-reconciliation/>

In the first pattern, the *ménage à trois*, which consists of mutually positive relationships among all three parties, is an optimal condition for a long-lasting peace.¹⁹² Although its prospect is dim in the near future, the goal of the U.S. (Party A) and Taiwan (Party B) should be to transform the negative relationship between the U.S. and China, as well as between Taiwan and China in the long run. This will be challenging since China (Party C), under the current Chinese leadership which took power in 2012, has become increasingly aggressive, toward both the U.S. (Party A) and Taiwan (Party B). However, the first pattern remains the most desirable and peaceful pattern.

Since “there is little prospect for a meaningful improvement in U.S.-China relations” in the near future, the tensions between China (Party C) and the U.S. (Party A) are likely to remain.¹⁹³ “Chinese militarization of the South China Sea and exercises around Taiwan will continue, eroding the fragility of the current status quo and raising the likelihood of diplomatic missteps . . . The U.S. would probably have no choice but to engage more forcefully, such as in the South China Sea.”¹⁹⁴ Also, the tensions between China (Party C) and Taiwan (Party B) are also likely to remain, and the prospect of an improvement is likewise dim in the near future. Given the enduring tensions, the second pattern, stable marriage that consists of a positive relationship between the U.S. (Party A) and Taiwan (Party B) at the exclusion of China (Party C) is likely to remain durable in the foreseeable future. On the other hand, the first pattern, *ménage à trois*

¹⁹² This relationship is ideal but rare and fragile in reality. The author’s email exchange with Professor Dittmer, November 14, 2020.

¹⁹³ US-China relations under a Biden presidency, A report by the Economist Intelligence Unit, 2020.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 7.

that consists of mutually positive peaceful relationships among all three parties, and therefore the most desirable pattern of all, will likely remain elusive.¹⁹⁵

2. Key Findings of a Survey of Experts on the Taiwan Strait

This study examines primary sources and secondary sources, and a survey of experts on the Taiwan Strait (see Appendix I). Most of these 24 experts are based in the U.S. and Taiwan. 16 out of 24, or 66% of them, possess a doctoral degree and three experts lead Taiwan-related professional or business associations. A few are former or current key policymakers in the U.S. or Taiwan. 9 are former or current government officials or military officers. 9 out of 24 work in think tanks, 10 out of 24 are professors in colleges and universities, and all 24 of them work in Taiwan or Taiwan-related fields professionally.

The author has surveyed expert opinions on the past, current, and future state of the Taiwan Strait. The survey examines expert opinions on causes of the recent changes in the Taiwan Strait. I asked the experts eight open-ended questions and solicited their responses and own opinions about the questions asked (see Appendix I: Section 3. Survey Questions and Selected Responses). A few responses have been edited for stylistic consistency, and some have not been disclosed per their request. Below are the survey's key findings.

¹⁹⁵ Professor. Dittmer agrees with this statement, but he is not optimistic because there are few successful menages and they are "fragile to hold together". The author's email exchange with Professor Dittmer, November 14, 2020.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On the status quo of the Taiwan Strait: ● All experts recognize there are two governments on two sides of the Taiwan Strait to be the objective status quo. Almost all recognize that the status quo is fluid. Most think the status quo is shifting and consider Chinese leadership to be the sole or at least the primary revisionist of the status quo. A few consider the Taiwanese leadership as the primary revisionist.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On peace in the Taiwan Strait: ● Almost all define peace to mean no war and that Taiwan is free from China's coercion. Most think peace is difficult to achieve in the Taiwan Strait. A few of them consider peace to mean no war and no conflict, and believe the PRC will have to abandon claims to Taiwan and renounce the use of force to achieve that.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On what international relations theory finds useful in explaining this China/US/Taiwan triangular relationship: ● Many consider balance of power, realism, spiral model, and constructivist theories to be applicable. On the other hand, a few consider these theories not as useful and seek a new applicable theory.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On why China has wanted to alter this triangular relationship in the Taiwan Strait since Xi took power in 2012: ● Almost all recognize that China considers Taiwan a part of China and a "core interest" for which it is willing to pay a very high price. Most consider China's "One China Principle" to be the guiding principle of China toward Taiwan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On whether the U.S. policy in the Taiwan Strait still maintains the status quo: ● Almost all think the objective of U.S. policy is still to maintain the status quo. Some think it serves every party's interest, particularly that of the U.S. A few think the policy is changing or may change in the future to that of "One China, Two Governments." At least one thinks the U.S. policy is to change the status quo.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On whether the growing Taiwanese identity necessarily develops into Taiwanese nationalism? Will Taiwanese nationalism necessarily develop into de jure/official Taiwanese independence: ● Almost all believe that Taiwanese identity is growing, and Taiwanese nationalism is either already here or emerging. However, that does not necessarily lead to de jure/official Taiwanese independence. Most consider the Taiwanese to be pragmatic and will not risk de jure/official Taiwanese independence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On whether the U.S. and Taiwan have the same interests in the Taiwan Strait: ● Many consider the two's interests are the same or similar enough that there are no fundamental differences. A few think that while the two's interests are not identical, there are no irreconcilable differences between the two.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On whether there is any peace solution that would satisfy all three parties: China, the U.S., and Taiwan and why does a long-lasting peace remain elusive: ● Many consider a peaceful solution difficult to achieve and some are quite pessimistic about China's flexibility. At least one has suggested "One Country, Two Governments" to be a model.

3. Policy recommendations for the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait

The primary strategic objective of the U.S. in the Taiwan Strait, at least in the short run, should be *effective deterrence* against China to maintain the status quo "peace" in the Taiwan Strait. In practice, one must decide how much deterrence, aided by some assurance, is needed to maintain the status quo. The U.S. "needs to be able to balance two positions: (1) clear, credible commitments to transfer defensive capabilities to Taiwan and, if necessary, to intervene on Taiwan's behalf; and (2) political reassurances that the U.S. does not plan to use its superiority now or in the future to harm Beijing's core security interests by promoting the independence of

Taiwan.”¹⁹⁶ In other words, the U.S. needs to continue its success in deterring China from invading Taiwan and assuring it will not support Taiwan’s official independence.

About *deterrence*, it is critical to assess the type of Chinese leadership that the U.S. is dealing with because different types of leadership will require different types of response.¹⁹⁷ In general, the status quo actors should be *assured* because they are defensive and may be provoked into a conflict. “Revisionist actors, on the other hand, should be robustly *deterred*, for they will exploit enemy weakness and initiate conflicts.”¹⁹⁸ On the international stage, whether China is a status-quo state generally satisfied with the international order is of considerable debate. In the specific theater of the Taiwan Strait, it is clear that China is dissatisfied with the status quo. Based on Chinese leadership’s track record since the mid-2010s in particular, the evidence suggests that China is more of a revisionist than a status quo actor in the Taiwan Strait.

However, categorizing China’s Taiwan policy as simply either status quo or revisionist is likely an oversimplification. Chinese leaders are likely to be conditional revisionists with Taiwan’s official or “creeping” independence as the primary conditions. They are unlikely to be undeterrable ideologues in practice, though their harsh and nonrational rhetoric about unifying Taiwan at all costs may paint a different picture.¹⁹⁹ China, in reality, is likely to be deterrable and should therefore be deterred skillfully. For the U.S. to continue effectively deterring China from taking Taiwan by force, the U.S. needs to remain capable of defending Taiwan. One of the main

¹⁹⁶ Christensen, Thomas, “The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict” *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, P. 8.

¹⁹⁷ Jervis, Robert, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton University Press, 1976,

¹⁹⁸ Christensen, Thomas, “The Contemporary Security Dilemma: Deterring a Taiwan Conflict”, P. 8.

¹⁹⁹ See *Ibid.*, 9 about undeterrable ideologues and conditional revisionists.

driving forces that China is altering the status quo there is its determination that U.S.'s deterrence is no longer credible. To address this growing perception, the U.S. needs to prove, both symbolically and substantively, that it can effectively defend Taiwan and deter China. If the Chinese leaders are conditional revisionists and the main determining condition is Taiwan's official declaration of its independence, the second position that the U.S. should take is *firm assurance*. Under this framework, the U.S. would not support the official independence of Taiwan, the condition that likely would turn China into a revisionist state. Therefore, the U.S. needs to balance these two positions.²⁰⁰

Public policy debates regarding deterrence versus assurance tend to be a false one because effective deterrence requires a proper mix of credible threats and sincere assurances.²⁰¹ Those who believe in deterrence are often concerned that deterrence is not strong enough to be effective, and those who believe in assurance are concerned that deterrence can lead to direct conflicts. A successful policy is not exact science but a work of art, which requires a proper mix of deterrence and assurance. As China becomes more aggressive in the Taiwan Strait to erode the U.S.' deterrence there, the question becomes how to determine the right mix of deterrence and assurance for the U.S. and Taiwan. The consensus is that the U.S.' deterrence against China must be stronger to retain its credibility, but also not too provocative.

In the early 2020s, Chinese leadership appears reluctant to further advance its military agenda in the Taiwan Strait. None of the three sides, at least in the foreseeable future, seems

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 8.

²⁰¹ Ibid, 10.

interested in unfolding a war there.²⁰² However, most experts expect that Chinese leadership will keep up the pressure in the Taiwan Strait, and accidents do happen. Therefore, the objective for all three should be to prevent an accident that could lead to an escalation. The immediate goal for the U.S. and Taiwan is to reduce the present tensions in the Taiwan Strait. A stronger dose of deterrence and firmer assurance from the U.S. will likely be a prerequisite for effective management of the complex Taiwan Strait circumstances.

In light of the above, the following three policy recommendations can be summarized as follows. These recommendations are based on these premises about the current Chinese leadership:

(1) The leadership places *staying in power as its top priority*. It is preoccupied with domestic issues such as public health, through which it has been trying to maximize the propaganda value of its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, reviving the economy, and intense competition with the U.S., among others on multiple fronts;²⁰³

(2) The leadership is *aggressive with a typical “double down” style*. Therefore, measures and theaters must be carefully chosen to prevent a series of further countermeasures from China, which could lead to a classic tit for tat;²⁰⁴

²⁰² Roy, Denny, “Rumors of War in the Taiwan Strait”, *The Diplomat*, March 20, 2021. https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/rumors-of-war-in-the-taiwan-strait/?fbclid=IwAR3G7BUG0kxVRbX4sysf-WZEYEBv4uxLAB-MqDS-HxQjsKt7CYLsj_5fbSw

²⁰³ Eleanor Albert, Beina Xu, and Lindsay Maizland, “The Chinese Communist Party”, Council on Foreign Relations, June 9, 2020. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinese-communist-party>

²⁰⁴ Glaser, Bonnie S., Matthew P. Fnaiole, “The 19th Party Congress: A more assertive Chinese foreign policy”, *The Interpreter*, October 26, 2017. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/19th-party-congress-more-assertive-chinese-foreign-policy>

(3) The leadership is *deceptive*. Though aggressive, China may appear compromising at times as a manipulative gesture disguised in a false atmosphere of cooperation to hide its true intentions of buying time to gain or regain an advantage;²⁰⁵

(4) The leadership is a *deterrable leadership* despite its tough rhetoric. It can be deterred at times, particularly when facing a superior and credible show of force. Recent events have demonstrated this in selective theaters (e.g., trade, finance, and sanctions etc.), where the U.S. has a clear advantage and China is unable to retaliate effectively. For example, during the U.S.-China trade war, the U.S. threatened to raise rates on March 2, 2019, if no deal was reached, but later extended the deadline after reporting it was making “substantial progress” in trade negotiations. Subsequently, China accepted the U.S.’s proposal.²⁰⁶²⁰⁷

(5) The leadership will *undergo a particularly sensitive period soon*. While its term is due to expire in 2022, it has abolished term limits, inviting many criticisms inside and outside of China. As a result, the leadership is expected to be particularly vulnerable in the early 2020s, which presents the U.S. a window of opportunity to deter;

(6) The leadership *feeds an increasingly nationalistic population* but may not always be able to control this zealous nationalism the leadership has helped created. However, it is important to

²⁰⁵ This point is perhaps less familiar and more difficult for American readers in general since it clashes with their basic values of honesty and fair play. Individual Chinese diplomats can be sophisticated, civilized, and professional, but the decision makers often employ different tactics. See Bernstein, Richard, Ross H. Munro, *The Coming Conflict with China*, Penguin Random House, 1998. Pye, Lucian, *Chinese Commercial Negotiating Style*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain. 1982.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Blackwill, Robert D, Trump’s Foreign Policies Are Better Than They Seem, Council of Foreign Affairs, P.11 [https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR%2084 Blackwill Trump 0.pdf](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/CSR%2084%20Blackwill%20Trump%200.pdf)

make a distinction between the leadership and the ordinary Chinese people not responsible for the leadership's action; and

(7) The leadership may look for *excuses to take actions in the Taiwan Strait* by portraying the U.S.'s actions as an interference with China's internal affairs preventing China's rise.²⁰⁸

Policy Recommendations

- **The U.S. must upgrade its Taiwan Strait policy by means of stronger deterrence against Chinese leadership. The objective is to maintain the new status quo “peace” in the Taiwan Strait by *effective deterrence*.**
 - The U.S., along with Taiwan, needs to send an unambiguous signal to Chinese leadership that a military solution in the Taiwan Strait is costly, dangerous, and uncertain, which may affect the leadership's own survival. A diplomatic settlement is far more preferable.
 - The U.S., along with Taiwan, should suggest that the common goal is to build a “common security framework” with a median line, which is also the red line, to avoid the spiral model of “unintended and undesired consequences” and the security dilemma of “overestimating the hostility of the other.” This would counter Chinese leadership's provocative behavior where it deploys warplanes regularly circling Taiwan and occasionally crossing the “median line” in the Taiwan Strait.

²⁰⁸ “Don't Give China Excuse to Attack Taiwan During Virus Outbreak, Ministry Advisers Say”, *Reuters*, February 25, 2020.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-health-taiwan-diplomacy/dont-give-china-excuse-to-attack-taiwan-during-virus-outbreak-ministry-advisers-say-idUSKCN20K06Z>

- If China does not comply, the U.S. should consider measures, with its regional allies, to deter the leadership by adopting a tougher China policy in the Taiwan Strait. Since the U.S. and China are engaged in intensive competition in many theaters, with the Taiwan Strait being one of the most volatile areas, the U.S. should adopt a primarily non-military and whole of the government approach for deterrence, particularly working with its regional allies.
- The U.S. should carefully select an effective non-military measure where the U.S. has a clear advantage to deter China's provocative behavior. For example, the U.S. can, in coordination with its allies, consider imposing economic and financial sanctions against near top-level CCP Taiwan policymakers and agencies, which may include but not limited to, the use of U.S. currency, U.S. visa restrictions, freezing of U.S. assets of these officials and their direct family members.^{209 210 211}
- The retaliation by the U.S. should be credible and forceful, as in the classic deterrence model. To maximize the retaliation's effectiveness, retaliation should not necessarily be predictable or proportional. Despite the U.S.'s controversial

²⁰⁹ U.S.'s Trump Administration has repeatedly sanctioned high level Chinese officials/CCP members over Hong Kong, and the Biden Administration has maintained that approach. See "Biden's First Hong Kong Sanctions Maintains Trump's Approach", *Stratfor*, March 17, 2021.

<https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/biden-s-first-hong-kong-sanctions-maintains-trump-s-approach>

²¹⁰ Blackwill, Robert D. and Philip Zelikow, "The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War", *Council of Foreign Relations*, February 2021. [CSR90 The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War \(cfr.org\)](#). The authors of this report argue "the issue is not whether the United States would react strongly to a Chinese assault on Taiwan. Of course, it would—with political denunciations, diplomatic offensives, economic sanctions, UN Security Council debates, and so forth." I recommend the U.S. to consider employing some of these measures now since Chinese warplanes have been crossing the "median line" in the Taiwan Strait or circling Taiwan provocatively on an almost daily basis for some time.

²¹¹ "Treasury No. 2 Adeyemo Sees Sanctions as Strong Policy Tool For Years to Come", *Reuters*, April 1, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-treasury-sanctions-idUSKBN2BP02D>

and confrontational style adopted in the late 2010s into the early 2020s, some of its unpredictable and disproportionate tactics have been successful in pressuring and deterring China.

- **The U.S. must upgrade its Taiwan Strait policy by assuring China firmly that Taiwan is not considering official independence. The objective is to maintain the new status quo “peace” in the Taiwan Strait by *firmer assurance* but also to help Taiwan ensure its continued success.**
 - The policy of stronger deterrence is likely to be more effective with firmer assurance. The U.S., working with Taiwan, should assure China that all three sides are committed to maintaining the “peace” in the Taiwan Strait and that Taiwan is not considering official independence. This assurance can also help pacify Chinese nationalism and prevent Chinese leadership from turning the U.S.’s retaliation into a propaganda tool.
 - However, the U.S. must also adjust its Taiwan policy by recognizing Taiwan’s growing identity and providing critical military, economic, and political support (without overly provoking China) to ensure Taiwan’s success as an alternative model of development and a winning narrative toward China.
 - The U.S. needs to continue to strengthen Taiwan’s military defensive capabilities by supporting Taiwan’s sensible “Overall Defense Concept” (ODC) policy, which focuses on more affordable and practical rather than expensive and flashy items. Also, the U.S. needs to help Taiwan enter into a de facto strategic alliance with

other democracies, strengthening its role and strategic value as the center of the U.S.'s first island chain.

- The U.S. needs to sign a free trade agreement to strengthen Taiwan's economy.

The U.S., working with its allies, needs to support Taiwan's position in international organizations that do not require statehood for membership.

Finally, the U.S. should assist Taiwan to present itself as a small but successful ethnic Chinese society that is liberal and democratic, with the rule of law which brings significant ideological value to the U.S.-led democratic alliance.

- **The U.S. should engage in dialogue with China to encourage Chinese leadership to be pragmatic and innovative about Taiwan's future, and to elicit compromises to help achieve a long-lasting peace, regardless how elusive this may be. The objective is to derive a compromise between China's nationalism based on the "One China Principle" and Taiwan's growing identity.**

- Since Chinese leadership in the future will still likely remain a product of the CCP loyal to the rigid Chinese political system, it will likely cling to strong Chinese nationalism based on China's "One China Principle." As a result, there will remain a palpable conflict between this aggressive Chinese nationalism and the growing Taiwanese identity.

- The current "One China Principle" doctrine and the associated "One Country, Two Systems" are in direct conflict with the growing Taiwan identity, which will prove incompatible and unacceptable for Taiwan.

- Chinese leadership needs to control the aggressive and fundamentalist form of Chinese nationalism, which supports a hardline position toward the U.S.-led democratic alliance and Taiwan.
- The U.S. should engage in dialogue with China, and encourage Chinese leadership to be pragmatic and innovative about Taiwan's future, though this may be fruitless in the short run. Not only will a military solution by Chinese leadership almost certainly be costly, dangerous, and uncertain, China will almost certainly not be able to govern Taiwan by force.
- Taiwan has developed a liberal democratic model that is successful for its people, respected in the world, and can be inspiring for China. The U.S. should encourage Taiwan, with its own growing self-identity, to be open and not exclude its Chinese-ness. The U.S. should also encourage Taiwan to be pragmatic about its own future, including its realistic, liberal, and democratic values. Absent these conditions, a long-lasting peace will likely continue to remain elusive.

Chapter IV: Conclusion: A New Status Quo “Peace” and A Long-Lasting Peace in the Taiwan Strait

The triangular relationship among the U.S., Taiwan, and China is one of the world’s most important, complex, and explosive international relationships. A delicate balancing act is required for all three parties to achieve a state of equilibrium and the objective status quo to sustain the “peace” in the Taiwan Strait. The premise of this study is that this “peace” in the Taiwan Strait is being threatened and the status quo is being shifted primarily due to China’s aggressive posture, Taiwan’s growing identity, and the reactive and evolving Taiwan Strait policy of the U.S.

However, this temporary and fragile “peace” is not a true and enduring peace for the Taiwan Strait, and conflicts and tensions will likely not be eliminated altogether. Peace, a long-lasting one, is an ideal permanent condition without wars and underlying conflicts. Yet the Taiwan Strait, even after seven “peaceful” decades, remains a dangerous flashpoint because these conflicts remain. Many experts assess that a true peace would not arrive until Taiwan is free of China’s coercion, a tactic often used by Chinese leadership to impose its will to resolve differences on both sides. If taking Taiwan by force is simply not a rational option for China, what other realistic options are available? On the other hand, if Taiwan’s official independence is simply not an option for Taiwan without taking great risks, what other realistic options are available? Also, how can the U.S. encourage a peaceful resolution of this stalemate? A long-lasting peace should be the ultimate objective, regardless how elusive it may be.

Such a long-lasting peace is likely to remain elusive for some time. The first step to a long-lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait likely requires the two conditions: (1) China not to use force against Taiwan and (2) Taiwan not to declare official independence. However, China has

increased its threat to use force against Taiwan, and a growing Taiwanese identity may lead to a movement leading to official independence of Taiwan. The U.S. and Taiwan currently enjoy a warm positive relationship, and the challenging goal for both should be to seek a positive relationship with an increasingly aggressive China. Therefore, either the U.S. or Taiwan must accept China's more aggressive position which seems highly unlikely, or they will have to pressure China further back, perhaps even to its pre-2012 position, jeopardizing their relations with China in the process. All in all, a compromise between China's nationalism based on the "One China Principle" and Taiwan's own growing identity will have to be made before the prospect of a long-lasting peace can take its nascent form. Until then, a true long-lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait will remain an elusive goal.



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Appendix I: The Research Plan

The research plan evaluates primary sources, secondary resources, and a survey of experts. The research plan seeks to investigate how to maintain the status quo “peace” and seek a long-lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait and provide a set of policy recommendations.

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3. Survey Questions and Selected Responses

- **Question (1) STATUS QUO: What is the status quo in the Taiwan Strait? Has the status quo shifted since 2016? If so, is it because of China's aggressive stance, the US's changing views, Taiwan's growing identity/independence movement, or/and other reasons?**

Selected Responses:

- *"We often talk about a "status quo" as though we were trying to maintain a situation that had existed for a long time, but looking back I would have to say that change is the norm... Beijing does not seem to recognize that its pressure campaign is sparking US support and encouraging a separate Taiwanese identity. I see US moves as basically reactive to comprehensive and increasing PRC pressure. Taiwan's growing self awareness is foremost the result of their successful, independent society, although fear of Chinese invasion is an increasingly relevant shared factor."*
- *"I would say there are at least three status quos: diplomatic, economic, and military. Diplomatically the status quo is mutual nonrecognition, China claims full sovereignty over Taiwan while Taiwan no longer claims sovereignty over the Chinese mainland (Taipei attempted to drop this claim but Beijing insisted it retain it). The military status quo is that the mainland has placed massive military assets across the Strait Taiwan has now arguably lost qualitative superiority. The economic status quo is that there is flourishing trade and investment across the Strait, and this has steadily grown over time. Both sides have benefited Taiwan perhaps more because it has a consistent trade surplus, but Taiwan is also more dependent on the mainland. Taipei has attempted to reduce this dependency by shifting investment to South and Southeast Asia, but with only limited success."*
- *"There is no status quo in the Taiwan Strait...the environment is constantly changing."*
- *"The two sides have become two sovereign states since 1949...Status quo is always changing, while mostly changed by China. Since Xi Jinping took power, he has become more aggressive toward Taiwan. The speech in Jan 2nd 2019 marked the significant and explicit change of the status quo. In particular, the "one-country-two-system for Taiwan" (一國兩制的台灣方案) becomes the core element of China's rhetoric toward Taiwan. Also, the status quo is changing because China is now challenging the global leading role of the US. The US-China relations have turned into*

competition and no longer quasi-alliance relationship. The dynamics between two major powers mostly shape the cross-strait relations.”

- *“China and Taiwan are near collision - a sea change from 2016...All three actors - the US, China, Taiwan - share responsibilities. Trump and Tsai are both revisionists in their policies toward China...China's aggressive stance is consistently aggressive, and at the very beginning of Trump's administration, the relation between China and the US is stable. In my opinion the variable is the attitude of the Administration of Taiwan.”*
- *“The status quo in the domestic politics of each of the three above mentioned actors has been changing. For both Washington and Taipei, a threatening China is essential to the internal manipulation for the sake of partisan benefit. Taiwan appeared to be the only vulnerable point of the Xi Jinping regime in 2016. His internal as well as external rivals could easily exploit the Taiwan issue to challenge his leadership.”*
- *“The definition of the status quo is contested. Each party has its own definition. Objectively, both Ma Ying-jeou and Tsai Ying-wen, responding to the status-quo preference of the TW public, have done nothing to challenge China's fundamental interests. China ... is increasingly using coercion to undermine TW's autonomy. Its aggressive stance is changing the status quo.”*
- *“The cross-Strait status quo is that Taiwan is neither formally independent nor part of the PRC. The status quo has changed, because Beijing has pressured the administration of Tsai Ing-wen to accept its preferred version of the one China principle, and Tsai has refused to make that commitment. The change is due almost entirely to pressure from China.”*
- *“ Taiwan remains self-governing, and its future decided peacefully by both parties 2. Status quo has not changed. 3. The status quo could come under increased under pressure due (1) PRC political, diplomatic, economic, military coercion, (2) changing demographics and identity on Taiwan (3) deterioration of US-PRC relations.”*
- *“The status quo is the existence of two legitimate governments on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. One an autocracy (PRC) and the other a government that has evolved into a liberal democracy.”*
- *“Status quo is a misleading description. From which angle? The world itself is dynamic.”*

- *"The shift in the cross-Strait status quo began before 2018 and can be mostly attributed to the PRC's increasingly aggressive behavior towards Taiwan."*
- *"The "status quo" is the notion that Taiwan will not declare de jure independence and that the PRC will not use force or other coercive means to compel Taiwan to be unified with it. The "status quo" has shifted over the years due to the rapid modernization of the Chinese military; while Taiwan has not moved toward de jure independence under President Tsai, social attitudes favoring independence or de facto independence has also undermined the viability of the "status quo." US support for Taiwan serves to reinforce the "status quo" and Taiwan's de facto independence."*

- **Question (2) PEACE: What does peace in the Taiwan Strait mean for you? If the Taiwan Strait is a flash point, why has there been no major military conflict there since 1949? Is this "peace" possible because of China's lack of military capabilities until recently, the US's policy of strategic ambiguity, choices made by Taiwan, or/and other reasons?"**

Selected Responses:

- *"A Taiwan free of coercive behavior by the PRC. ... While Taiwan remained an important issue for the CCP and its legitimacy, the focus was economic renewal and an aversion to external political conflicts that may undermine that goal. 2013-today – Xi's arrival and a retrenchment to a renewed commitment to communist/Maoist doctrine wrapped in the role of the party as the guarantor of the country's primacy. Taiwan re-emerged, for the first time since the 1950s, as a core issue that needed to be resolved sooner rather than later coupled with the potential means to accomplish that goal. China's military is now a threat to end the civil war in the favor of the communists. Is this "peace" possible because of China's lack of military capabilities until recently, the US's policy of strategic ambiguity, choices made by Taiwan, or/and other reasons? There are myriad factors as noted above."*
- *"Peace to me means the PRC allowing Taiwan to set its own policy free from coercion...It is appropriate to call the Taiwan Strait a "flashpoint" because the PRC is continually building a comprehensive capability to capture Taiwan by force with the Strait being key terrain for such a struggle..."*
- *"Peace means the absence of major conflict to resolve Taiwan's status...Why no major conflict 49-now? (1) It has not been in interest of China up to now since it has had larger national security objectives (this could be changing) (2) US military deterrence against China (some say this is weakening) (3) PLA lack of real ability to*

attempt take island by force (this is changing) (4) Cautious Taiwan policies (this could change...remember Chen Shui-bian)"

- *"Peace means no war. Peace has been maintained in the Strait since 1949 thanks to the preponderance of US power and skillful management, including but not limited to "strategic ambiguity." China's rapid rise, especially its military modernization, eroded the basis for peace. But Taiwan's pursuit of Independence is probably the most direct cause..."*
- *"...peace means that Taiwan is exempt from military involvement, directly as well as indirectly, in any aggression taking place anywhere in the world. Such a practice would include renouncing the use of force targeting anywhere inside the PRC territories or supporting the US invasion anywhere else in the world. Peace does not mean lack of military confrontation, though. Willingness to engage in military defense is the other side of peace commitment."*
- *"...no war. There has been peace in this sense since the advent of reform and opening in 1978. This peace is fragile because of provocations and threats on both sides. These might be eliminated by agreements met in cross-Strait negotiations, but these have been stymied since the end of the Ma regime by disputes in which China has set conditions for opening talks that Taipei under Tsai has refused in principle to meet."*
- *"Since China is unlikely to give up the goal of unification (actually it is annexation), peace consists of consecutive and successful deterrence. The deterrence mainly comes from (1) Taiwan's defense capability, (2) China's lack of military capability, (3) difficulty of landing battle if invading Taiwan, and (4) perhaps most importantly, US' commitment in the region. China knows it is not time to fight against the US yet."*
- *"Peace means no violent confrontations between the two sides of the Strait. Taiwan and the PRC have been in at least a cold peace since 1979, when the shelling of offshore islands Kinmen and Matsu ceased. The "peace" has been made possible by the US normalization of relations with the PRC, in combination with the US policy of strategic ambiguity with respect to the defense of Taiwan."*
- *"The key is that all geopolitical stakeholders have been cautiously achieving the equilibrium over the years in the Taiwan Strait. The dynamic equilibrium which the stakeholders have consistently achieved over the years is instrumental in the peacemaking."*

- *“Peace in the Taiwan Strait can only be achieved through Beijing, Washington, and other governments acknowledging if not recognizing the legitimacy of the ROC (Taiwan). Beijing has been either deterred from use of force or believes it too unnecessary to achieve its goal of One Country Two Systems”.*
- *“Peace means 1) the absence of war; 2) the non-use of non-violent but coercive tools of influence; 3) a willingness by all sides to peacefully coexist and cooperate where possible.”*
- *“The US has been thus able to deter China from invading Taiwan and in the early years prevent Chiang Kai-Shek from trying to retake China. This may not be the case indefinitely.”*
- *“China lacks the capacity and confronts high costs if it chooses military means. US diplomacy and Taiwan pragmatism reinforced these facts.”*
- *“...weaknesses in military capability of both CCP and KMT + US interposition of itself between them--"neutralization" of the Taiwan Strait.”*
- *“There is the first and the second Taiwan Strait Crisis? “*
- *“The One China Policy, China's focus on domestic development, and Taiwan's restraint have kept the peace.”*
- *“Peace doesn't mean the absence of war, but rather the absence of conflict. Therefore, peace would be a context in which the PRC abandons claims to Taiwan and renounces the possibility of using force against it to compel a solution.”*

- **Question (3) THEORY: What international relations theory, if any, do you find most useful in explaining this China/US/Taiwan triangular relationship? Do you consider Offensive Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, Deterrence Model, Spiral Model, Balance of Power, or/ any other theories/models helpful in explaining this relationship?**

Selected Responses:

- *“The PRC’s perspective reminds me most of offensive realism: seeking regional primacy while presenting entanglements to suppress major powers in other*

regions...Taiwan's balancing act keeps it keenly attuned to the governing philosophies of the two great powers..."

- *"...constructivism (Taiwan is "part of China", a leftover piece of the Chinese civil war, and not an independent state--i.e. The Westphalian system "constructs" rights and recognitions for "states" in the inter-state system, and BOTH Taipei and Beijing have traditionally shared this "constructed" idea about what the confrontation is about) is one key. Deterrence Models are helpful to explain why the US role has worked to keep the peace since 1979, especially with the massive shift in the Taiwan-PRC balance of power since the 1990s..."*
- *"Balance of Power: The US changed the triangular relationship in the 1970s due to the goal of balancing Russia. Now, conflicts may occur when China breaks the balance of power. The power transition theory can explain the relationship between China and the US. It is not possible for the US to wait and see how China rises. Constructivism may also work. All players send signals and learn from how to interact with others in this relationship."*
- *"Relational IR that exposes the different relational cultures and contexts of different actors explains how they can misconceive the incentives of one another. Postcolonial IR suggests how Taiwan's political system features undecidability that undermines the validity of structural explanation."*
- *"No one theory captures the complexity of the Taiwan situation. Of all the options, I prefer defensive realism combined with the spiral model. However, I fear that China's motivation is changing from fear to greed, and that we are moving from a world of defensive realism to offensive realism."*
- *"We need a tailor-made one for us."*
- *"All theories are relevant, every single one of them, to one or more of the six dimensions of the cross-strait relationship: three domestic politics and three bilateral relations."*
- *"...balance of power and deterrence."*
- *"Balance of Power is the most explanatory one."*
- *"I don't think there is any theory that is of any use in this respect."*
- *"Realism with some constructivist aspects."*

- *"I have little use for such stuff."*
- *"Realist. So time is running out."*
- *"Constructivism"*
- *"Offensive realism and deterrence model, with balance of power for the US-China axis."*

- **Question (4) CHINA: Why has China wanted to alter this triangular relationship in the Taiwan Strait since Xi took power in 2012? If you agree that is the case, what is China's ideology toward Taiwan and China's Taiwan policy in practice? What costs do you think China considers acceptable to pursue the "One China Principle" and unify Taiwan?**

Selected Responses:

- *"I understand the PRC's goal has always been "reunification," suggesting a consistent desire to alter the relationship. Of course, this desire remained largely shelved until Xi. "Xi Thought" encompasses the "China Dream," including a raft of power and status markers, most relevantly "The Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese People." In the Sino-historical cycle of "分久必合, 合久必分," the CCP would place itself squarely in the former and "naturally" expect to proceed to unification... It is hard to imagine a price such a government would not pay to achieve a treasured aim. Indeed, the longer Xi has to consolidate his power, the less resistance there will be within his government. Such a negative cycle would require at a minimum a leadership shakeup to change."*
- *"I see Xi's Taiwan policy as fundamentally a continuation of Hu Jintao's. The goals are (1) deter independence with the threat of military force, and (2) seek peaceful unification through economic integration and cultural exchanges. What's changed since 2012 is not Xi's rise but Chinese political elites' perceptions of their own rising power relative to the US--they think the US is in decline--and the growing gap in hard power between Beijing and Taipei, which is undeniable and irreversible. That leads them to believe they can press harder on the US to reduce its presence in the western Pacific, and on Taiwan to try to force unification. I think China's Taiwan policy in practice has been a mix of "hard" threats and "soft" inducements designed to accomplish these two goals. I think the likely costs to alter the status quo and forcibly unify Taiwan are still too high for current leaders to bear...The costs they are willing to bear to prevent a formal declaration of de jure independence by Taiwan leaders are much higher, because that would challenge the fundamental legitimacy of the*

Communist Party. The only scenario in which I think China would attack Taiwan is if there is a declaration of independence.”

- *“To retrench the CCP at the core of China and Xi at the core of the CCP. Economic liberalization placed strains on the legitimacy of the party requiring a hardening and renewed focus on “core principles”. There’s nothing like a grievance to focus minds and the unresolved matter of Taiwan’s sovereignty is an important ox to gore in mobilizing Chinese citizens...The One-China Principle...That is China’s ideology. What costs..Anything up to but not including CCP rule of China. If the action or its potential fall-out jeopardizes the legitimacy of the party in China then it is likely to be rejected.”*
- *“It is a common misperception of Xi’s Taiwan policy. Having served in provinces across the Strait for 22 years, he knows Taiwan and is not eager to reunify Taiwan through force. Between 2012 and 2016, his emphasis was actually on “winning the hearts and minds of the Taiwan people.” The Xi-Ma summit of November 2015 was for Ma’s, but also intended for Tsai’s consumption if she were to win the election of 2016 and adopted a more moderate course. His position hardened, I believe, after the Trump and Tsai administrations seem to be coordinating their steps on China. And things spiraled downward ever since. Now I am very pessimistic because China would not back down if Taiwan is seen as ganging up with the US against China. With Xi’s ascendance to his third term on his agenda, he has even less room to maneuver. Cost? Taiwan’s value - domestic political, strategic, and economic - far outweighs any conceivable cost.”*
- *“Xi would like to achieve cross-strait unification, which would, ceteris paribus, enhance his personal glory as well as the economic and strategic interests of the PRC. But offering economic inducements has not sufficed to interest Taipei in negotiating a unification agreement, inasmuch as Beijing has at the same time maintained its right to use force. The threat of force has scared Taipei away, but Beijing fears giving it up might unleash a drive for formal independence. Xi has stepped up threats (including overflights) since 2016 because the Tsai regime has expressed so little interest in peaceful reunification. So it’s a downward spiral.”*
- *“The Chinese Communist Party and the PRC have long sought to subordinate the ROC (Taiwan) under its One Country Two Systems formula for unification... In accordance with their Successor State Theory, the ROC ceased to exist in 1949. In this context, One Country Two Systems is a zero-sum game played out*

internationally. Arguably, an increase in Taiwan's international legitimacy is perceived to be a decrease in CCP legitimacy, particularly in a domestic context."

- *"China's motivation: (1) Nationalism: pursue the greatness of China and Chinese people. (2) Diversionary Theory: because there are great pressures from domestic issues, especially rising inequality. China always thinks Taiwan is part of holy territory so that they are pushing for the goal. China is increasing its power, but at this moment, using force is not the priority. They are still spending a lot of resources and trying to "buy" Taiwan. Their budget is huge for sure. However, they might not be ready to take the costs of a potential military loss. Taiwan issue is not an emergency to the regime."*
- *"China's goal has been constant. Its means has changed as the party in power in TW has changed. During the Ma period, BJ had confidence that persuasion would stimulate progress towards its goal. With the DPP in power, it has suspended persuasion and shifted to "coercion without violence." Up until now, China is prepared to pay the cost of delaying unification in the hope that persuasion and/or pressure will work sooner or later. A trend toward TW's "permanent separation" would be unacceptable. Having to fight a war with the US is still unacceptable."*
- *"Beijing's approach is primarily bluffing but prepared for the worst...The maximal cost China could bear to keep one China nominally intact is a variable than a constant. The more the sunk investment in pushing for unification, the more bearable further investment in doing the same."*
- *"Xi sees the absorption of Taiwan as essential to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. He is still constrained, however, by Taiwan's capabilities, the prospect of American involvement, and international opinion. I believe China is willing to pay the cost of killing millions of Taiwanese and becoming, for a period, a global pariah state, IF it thinks Taiwan will otherwise drift beyond its grasp."*
- *"China would argue it is not they who are altering it. If I could answer the PRC "cost" question, I would be the Director of National Intelligence for sure! Indeed, everything is context dependent. I think it boils down to the question of what course of action would be best for the maintenance of the CCP in power."*
- *"China is stronger now and is asserting interests that it has long held but was not capable of enforcing. Xi believes that China has a strategic window of opportunity to advance its historic mission of "reunifying" Taiwan. Everything short of the collapse of the CCP."*

- *"Xi is more patient than he seems. Looking impatient is a technique for exercising patience. Diplomatic isolation accompanied with economic incentives and disincentives aimed at different constituencies in Taiwan."*
- *"Any Leader of CCP wants to "take Taiwan back" in his mind, but in practice, keeping it in a dynamic equilibrium, better China can play the active part, is his best option."*
- *"Do you think your presumption is fair? A triangular relationship could not be altered unilaterally. I disagree with your perspective."*
- *"For China, this is not about cost".*
- *"Taiwan is a core interest for China"*
- *"...because China thinks it can and at any cost (if pushed)"*
- *"China has always sought to annex Taiwan, but the rhetoric and actions in Beijing has escalated since Xi took over. Taiwan is territory the PRC needs to break out of the bottleneck in the first island chain and for force projection into the Pacific. It is also an ideological tool to fuel domestic support for the CCP and justify a massive arms buildup. It is also part of an ideological battle pitting the Western-led liberal-democratic order, of which Taiwan is a prime example of success, against the kind of authoritarian revisionism proposed by China. Xi has backed himself into a corner over Taiwan, playing up his ability to "recover" territory which he claims belongs to China. Incentives and "peaceful" efforts have all failed and have in fact blown back, hence the harsher - and more military - approach to Taiwan."*

- **Question (5) THE US: Is the US's policy in the Taiwan Strait still to maintain the status quo? Has that changed and if so, how? What are the specific policy recommendations that you would offer the US?**

Selected Responses:

- *"Yes, US' policy has been relatively stable. The US should pay more attention to China's aggressiveness in all areas. Recently there are debates about strategic ambiguity. I think the US should discuss more on how to deter China's ambition. So far, many people are still very naive toward China.."*
- *"The US policy is one of strategic ambiguity designed to maintain the status quo. It shifts periodically with assessments of the military or rhetorical threats."*

- *"It's to deter aggression. If that means status quo to you then yes. Has that changed and if so, how? No. The present policy suite is working. A move from strategic ambiguity to strategic clarity would be my next logical step."*
- *"US policy toward Taiwan has not changed. That said, the Trump Administration has adjusted what it was willing to do to support Taiwan within the 3 Joint Communiques, 6 Assurances, and TRA."*
- *"1. still status quo; 2. only the Republican eagles can really break the ground: viewing the CCP regime fundamentally flawed."*
- *"The status quo in the Taiwan Strait is the existence of two legitimate governments. The primary policy recommendation is to consciously and carefully move toward a US One China, Two Governments policy. Along these lines, the US would seek a "soft balancing" of legitimacy on both sides. Focus would be on legitimacy, without taking any position on sovereignty. The initial step in implementing this policy would be a US-ROC (Taiwan) Joint Statement, negotiated at the most senior levels on both sides. But if necessary, can be signed by AIT and TECRO. Visits to Taiwan by the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs should be routine... If necessary, the US side could include a unilateral statement regarding continuation of a US One China Policy."*
- *"No, Washington's policies towards Taiwan are fundamentally circumstantial."*
- *"Yes. The status quo allows the US to have its cake and eat it too. We get formal relations with PRC, and informal (but still deep and substantial) relations with Taiwan. The US has to balance against whichever side is actively trying to change the status quo. In the 2000s, that was Chen Shui-bian, so the US used its leverage to prevent Chen from following through. Now, it is Beijing that is actively changing the SQ, so the US is responding by increasing arms sales and diplomatic visits. I'd recommend the US make it clear our policy seeks to balance PRC pressure and counter any attempt to unilaterally alter the SQ. If the PRC stops buzzing Taiwan with military aircraft, then we should promise no more high-level visits. "*
- *"The policy hasn't really changed. It's being managed by a dangerous crew that gets a charge out of pushing Beijing's buttons. American sympathy for Taiwan is real, but this policy of probing is not in Taiwan's interest."*
- *"It serves US interests insofar as Washington doesn't want to give Taiwan a reason to provoke China in a way that could drag the US into a war with China. It does not serve Taiwan well because it energizes the vocal but diminishing minority who say*

that since Taiwan can't count on US backing, it might as well seek accommodation with Beijing."

- *For the benefit of Taiwan, they should keep selling advanced weapons to Taiwan but with a reasonable price and help enhance the situation of Taiwan in international status.*
- *If you refer to the one-China policy while supporting Taipei under various different circumstances, I agree that it has been effective by and large over the past few decades. In fact, Taipei has been strategically ambiguous in its ultimate relations with Beijing as well. However, whether such practices are achievable or even desirable remain to be seen.*
- *"So far, the status quo is the basic policy, but there are signs of some seeking to turn Taiwan into an active part of the US anti-PRC/CCP coalition. Simple maintenance of liberal values of freedom, economics, justice, and electoral politics."*
- *"Continue to emphasize the importance of Taiwan's democracy and a commitment to its defense. Integrate Taiwan into the broader coalition of democracies to counter the rise of revisionist authoritarian states."*
- *"Trump's policy was to change, not maintain, the SQ. His prognosis was correct that China's rapid rise is becoming a threat to the US leadership role. But his prescriptions were wrong and failed to remedy the ills. Worse, he overplayed the "Taiwan card," putting Taiwan in harm's way. I hope China and the US under Biden will soon resume their "strategic dialogue" to clarify each other's true intentions and reduce unnecessary suspicions. Biden has a full agenda, especially at home. But if he handles China well, his jobs at other foreign policy issues will be a lot easier. Taiwan for sure will be at or near the top of the agenda. He'd better go well prepared."*

"U.S. policy definitely remains maintaining the status quo; i.e., no formal independence for Taiwan, but no forced unification on the part of the PRC. That is the best we can do for the foreseeable future, since any active encouragement by the U.S. of Taiwan independence would likely lead to a PRC attack. The U.S. needs to be as clear as possible about its support for Taiwan short of doing anything to encourage Taiwan's moving towards independence."
- *"The US' official policy is to maintain the "status quo" in the Taiwan Strait. However, as relations between China and the West sour, and as China challenges the international order, the value of democratic Taiwan has increased accordingly. Bolstering Taiwan's deterrence so that its people can decide for themselves what*

their nation should look like is key to avoiding armed conflict over Taiwan. Ensuring the perpetuation of the "status quo" is, for all intents and purposes, ensuring the continued existence of Taiwan as a free, democratic and sovereign nation. It is very much in the US's interest that Taiwan remain so."

- *"If the US policy is to maintain the status quo, it has failed...Officially, US policy has followed the Three Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. To that, you might say we have recently stressed Reagan's Six Assurances, underlining the fact that beyond the official documents there are abiding cultural resonances between our countries. Underlining all of these is the principle that any unification is entered into freely, not by force. You might call this the US "bottom line" or "red line" and this has in no way changed. My recommendation would be that as the PRC increases its power, find efficient ways to counter it in coordination with allies and partners, very much including Taiwan."*

- **Question (6) TAIWAN; Will the growing Taiwanese identity necessarily develop into Taiwanese nationalism? Will Taiwanese nationalism necessarily develop into de jure/official Taiwanese independence? This could lead to a direct conflict with China's "One China Principle" so how should Taiwan effectively deal with it?**

Selected Responses:

- *"The people of Taiwan have long maintained a cautious attitude toward the PRC's power, an unwillingness to challenge it directly that has remained constant even while that power has grown exponentially. Local identity may temper some of that caution, but I do not believe it will overcome it. Absent a precipitous decline in PRC power, I do not believe local/national identity will develop to the degree of seeking de jure independence. It may however seek new means of ensuring its de facto independence, which would in turn trigger some level of conflict with Xi's interpretation of the PRC's "One China Principle." In fact, the most recent round of escalation reflects just this cycle. If the PRC were to attempt an invasion now, however, it may substantially remove Taiwan's opposition to the idea of independence."*
- *"Despite growing Taiwanese identity over the past two decades, the overwhelming majority of the population in Taiwan support some form of the status quo. The possibility of a nationalist movement on Taiwan will be affected less by a growing sense of Taiwanese identity and more by the perceived aggressiveness by China against Taiwan..."*

- *“The ROC (Taiwan) already exists as an independent sovereign state. Most on Taiwan supports the status quo. The US requires a more accurate representation of the status quo and extension of greater political legitimacy. Without a conscious move toward a more normal, stable, and constructive relationship between the US and Taiwan, based on a US One China Two Governments policy, the likelihood of a formal change to the ROC Constitution, freeze of the Law Government relations between the Taiwan Area and Mainland Area, and change of the name of the country are increasingly likely. In a Joint Statement, Taiwan need not endorse or even acknowledge a unilateral US One China reference.”*
- *“Taiwan nationalism is already here to stay and President Tsai is leading it. There is no need to differentiate de jure/de facto Independence, because sufficient mini-steps have added up to a new brand of a new country. Neither Xi nor Tsai is interested in reaching out to each other to avoid a conflict. Neither the US. So a recipe for cross-strait conflict in the near future, short of a direct US-China clash. Recommendation: US has to reassess 1) its overall policy toward China, be it one of confrontation (with or without regime change), competitive coexistence, or accommodation; 2) Taiwan's value and role; 3) costs to be paid with each policy.”*
- *“No change in the Constitutional and legal frameworks and practices is the best way to preserve the legal and de facto status quo. Continuing to be an effective sovereign democracy is the best way to deal with China ideologically. Taiwan will continue to seek effective political dialogues with China under the premises of Republic of China (Taiwan). In other words, PRC has to deal with the issue of "Republic of China (Taiwan)" before any sensible political dialogue becomes practicable.”*
- *“Cautious steps to resist Chinese pressures. Coordinate carefully with the US. President Tsai has been exemplary in this regard. Keep reminding the world that Taiwan is a thriving democracy with a distinct culture (film, cuisine, couture) and a good international citizen which deserves inclusion in international fora. Emphasize that China's 1CP and Taiwan's were never the same, point out repeatedly that Taiwan has never accepted Beijing's definition.”*
- *“Both Taiwanese nationalism and independence rely on a veiled reference to anti-China disposition. Without relating to China negatively in various symbolic ways, nationalism lacks substance. The Taiwan-China binary does not work in daily lives. Nationalism requires constant self-cleansing in various creative ways in order to project the unwanted Chineseness on certain selected scapegoats. Fascism is the plausible solution.”*

- *"Yes, Taiwanese nationalism is emerging. Taiwan is a de facto independent state already, but for de jure status, Taiwanese must do more in international politics. The US is the most essential player. Taiwan must persuade the US to alter its stance on this issue. Also, it could be done by support from other major powers. The best way is changing the perception of China and its One China Principle in the world first. No. Growing Taiwanese identity does not mean movement towards independence. Indeed, Taiwan people pragmatically understand that independence probably means war, which they don't want. Also, because of methodological problems, the strength of pure Taiwanese identity is actually not clear. There is a decent possibility that the dominant attitude is a mixed, Taiwanese-Chinese identity. This needs to be studied more."*
- *"Nationalism has already appeared, but is inhibited from moving toward independence by the mainland's threats. It already conflicts with the one China principle and Taipei would in my view be prudent to return to the Ma policy of one China two interpretations in order to reopen direct communications."*
- *"It appears to be heading in that direction. China will likely try to use intimidation to reduce this trend. Adhere to liberal values in Taiwan society. Repeat that Taiwan awaits China becoming an attractive partner with whom to reach a deal on reunification, whatever that deal might look like."*
- *"The Taiwanese identity will continue to grow, but it will not eclipse the survival instinct. The 1992 Consensus was, briefly, a convenient fiction. It has since been reinterpreted by Beijing such that Taiwan must reject it. It's useless."*
- *"The fundamentalist Taiwanese identity will cause the Taiwanese independence for sure, but the Chinese identity which co-exist with is the best cure for the conflict of both sides."*
- *"Taiwan nationalism is already the case. This does not de facto mean a move for taidu (Taiwanese independence). If it did, we would anticipate major military actions from Beijing."*
- *"Suppress Taiwanese independence movement to preserve peace. TI is difficult for this is culturally and emotionally important to China, particularly the leadership."*
- *"You will be surprised how our Taiwanese can be so flexible as encountering a challenge of life or death."*

- *“Self-identity is inherently related to nationalism. The form of nationalism that has developed in Taiwan is civic in nature, and is increasingly multinational, particularly among younger generations. Taiwan, furthermore, is characterized not by one but two forms of overlapping nationalisms: taidu (Taiwan independence) and huadu (ROC independence). Both are defined by what Taiwan is not - that is, the PRC - as well as a deep attachment to democratic norms. The two forms of nationalism, even if not acknowledged, are in direct contradiction with the PRC's "one China " principle, which does not break the existence of Taiwan/ROC as an entity separate from the PRC. The two are therefore in direct conflict, and that conflict will remain as long as the PRC refuses to acknowledge that reality. Another alternative, highly unlikely, is that Taiwan would capitulate and accept Beijing's terms.”*

- **Question (7) THE US/TAIWAN: Do the US and Taiwan have the same interests in the Taiwan Strait? If they are not entirely the same, what are the differences, and what can be done to resolve them? What could the US or/and Taiwan do to counteract but also prevent a war with China?**

Selected Responses:

- *The most salient US interests include: (1) An equitable international system, including access to “the commons” and freedom of navigation, particularly in and around the Taiwan Strait; (2) Peaceful resolution of disputes, this one in particular; (3) A healthy network of allies and partners that believes together we can deter or deny systemic disruption by the PRC; and (4) A healthy international system that encourages bad actors like Beijing to improve their behavior. I believe Taiwan wishes at a minimum to preserve its de facto independence and democratic form of government. To do so requires the support of the United States and other like-minded states. During ordinary times, pragmatism suggests that Taipei take steps to avoid unduly antagonizing Beijing, even if at times that means paying less attention to national defense. . However, the current trend is basically in the direction of Taiwan’s defense. For Taiwan, the Strait is key terrain and a likely invasion route. Thus, despite a lack of official relations, Taiwan’s position as a democratic supporter of the international system puts it in good alignment with US goals to uphold that system. Moreover, although Beijing has shown the inclination to cause trouble in the East and South China Seas as well as along the Indian border, Taiwan remains its primary strategic direction (see the US DOD Report to Congress on China for 2020). That places Taiwan in an especially critical position to judge and (with help) shape PRC decision making. Enhancing the ability to resist Chinese aggression has thus become a key common goal for the Taiwan Strait and beyond...”*

- *On some issues, interests align. On others, they may not. This is why a US-Taiwan Joint Statement is critical to aligning interests to domestic audiences on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. Would such an act trigger use of force? Short answer is no, as long as the US includes a unilateral One China statement... A US One China Two Governments policy is the ultimate compromise solution, and has been criticized in Green leaning Taiwan media as locking in the status quo. Beijing most certainly would oppose, to the point of perhaps withdrawing their ambassador from Wash DC. And maybe some military exercises. But because they know such a policy would make a new Taiwan constitution harder, and in fact would likely be opposed staunch Taiwan independence advocates, Beijing would likely not use force. After an initial US-ROC Joint Statement, the US side probably would need to negotiate a new basis for US-PRC relations to replace the outdated Three Communiques framework.*
- *"The vast majority of Taiwan citizens reject de jure independence in the face of the PRC military threat. This could lead to a direct conflict with China's "One China Principle" [OCP] so how should Taiwan effectively deal with it? Tsai's present course makes the most sense. Reject China's OCP, govern the island moderately and deter any attempt to undermine the present sovereign state the island enjoys.*
- *US and Taiwan interests are not identical. Taiwan is too small compared with the Mainland and too close to it geographically. As long as the US cannot overcome the "tyranny of geography" and the threat of "carrier killer" missiles, Taiwan would have to bear the brunt physically if anything goes wrong. And the US will remain intact with ego bruised and influence reduced for sure - but no physical pain. As a society more divided (for two decades) than the current America, Taiwan is hardly able to resist an onslaught from China. With so little will to fight, Taiwan is NOT a fortress as some American think it is. Whatever the US decides, it'd better see things more clearly as is. A political solution is always better than a military one.*
- *Yes. The core interest is to ensure Taiwan is not part of China (CCP regime). For the US, the geopolitical position of Taiwan is essential. Should CCP take Taiwan, the US loses the status of hegemony in this region. And China will have a base for its navy toward the whole Pacific. Also, the economic partnership is important to both Taiwan and the US. Taiwan's high-tech industries are particularly important in the relationships. The difference may be the desire of Taiwanese to become formally independent, or full diplomatic recognition. That takes time to persuade American elites. The best way to prevent a war is to have efficient power of self-defense. This could be done by the cooperation between the US and Taiwan.*

- *This situation has changed over time. Two questions are key. First, do Taipei and DC share the same or overlapping goals. Second, what is their approach to risk. In my view, there was a divergence of goals from 1995 through 2007. Also, Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian were more risk-accepting than Washington approved. From 2008 through 2016, there was a convergence of goals and an approach that was more risk-averse. There have been signs that Trump's instincts (not goals) diverge from Taipei's, but he is not focused enough to act upon them.*
- *(1) I am not sure how to answer the question about US and Taiwan interests, other than neither want to see the status of Taiwan resolved anyway but peacefully. I would say that both in the US and Taiwan different groups have different views. To help prevent a war with China over Taiwan the US should counsel friends in Taiwan not to make political movers that could trigger a conflict and assist Taiwan to enhance its self-defense.*
- *The prevention of military conflict and keeping equilibrium of the trio game are the same interests. The intention of global domination of the US and the unilateral benefit are the differences. The US plays a moderate role in keeping peace in TS and Taiwan takes an active role to develop the Chinese identity with Taiwanese one at the same time. Additionally, use the "differ on the definition" part of "consensus" to keep flexible .*
- *No: the US is interested in preserving peace and stability, and maintaining the status quo. The Taiwan interest is different--expanding Taiwan's diplomatic space, seeking formal recognition. It is not in the US interest to fight for Taiwan de jure independence. I think that's the right policy, because the US derives the most benefit from the current arrangement.*
- *Neither the US nor Taiwan is a valid category to define its interests. Both suffer severe political cleavages. This question is highly biased in assuming that a united front between an integral Taiwan and an integral US is desirable. A triangle game cannot proceed with one party denied the potential to become an ally.*
- *Their interests are close enough. Neither wants war. The most important factor is the fragility of US-China relations. If that relationship, contentious though it will remain, can be stabilized, Taiwan will be more secure.*
- *Yes, for the moment. Drastic change in the U.S.-China relationship may lead to a different landscape though.*

- *Sometimes, yes; sometimes, no. Good communication is necessary.*
- *Those interests are more aligned than they have been since 1979.*
- *In my opinion they are the same on the one China question.*
- *not necessarily the same; no easy answer to the latter*
- *Yes, they do have the same interests*
- *“Democracy underscores the shared interests of the US and Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait, more so since China has launched an ideological battle on the international order. As stated above, the US and international community have every interest in preventing a PLA attack against Taiwan, and therefore must continue to provide sufficient deterrence and assurances to Taipei. The US and partners (as well as Taiwan), must obviate the use of force as a possible option for Beijing by making it too costly and providing the necessary signaling to convince Beijing that such an outcome would be obtained.”*

- **Question (8) PEACE SOLUTION: Is there any peace solution that would satisfy all three parties: China, the US, and Taiwan? Why does a long-lasting peace remain elusive and what do you think is the future of this triangular relationship? What are the general comments you would like to make about this relationship?**

Selected Responses:

- *If China were a democracy, and the CCP did not insist on exerting control over all independent spaces in Chinese society, then a peace deal could be possible. The problem is that the CCP will never give up on the ultimate goal of bringing Taiwan under the PRC, and for the CCP, that means exerting unchallenged control over politics and society in Taiwan. Until that day, I do not think a lasting resolution of the Taiwan issue is possible. The best that Taiwan and the US can do is to preserve Taiwan's current political system and substantial de facto independence. Any attempt to formalize that status will provoke an attack from the PRC. Any attempt to forcibly unify Taiwan with the PRC under CCP control will be resisted by the large majority of Taiwanese and provoke a response from the US.*
- *The best solution for ensuring peace is a US One China Two Governments policy, in which the US moves toward a more normal, stable, and constructive relations with both sides of the Taiwan Strait. A more normal relationship with Taiwan does not*

and should not imply inserting itself in any cross-Strait negotiations. Nor should the US support Taiwan independence (and shouldn't oppose it either as long as no one gets killed in the process).

- *Peace remains elusive because 1) China sticks stubbornly to its goal of unification under the one country, two systems formula AND 2) has been unwilling to adjust the goal or the formula to accommodate the long-standing opposition of the Taiwan public. Because of China's approach, and because, so far, Taiwan has shown resilience and the United States has shown resolve in supporting Taiwan, it's hard to imagine any peace solution. The outcome might be different a) if China were to modify its approach to unification to make it more palatable, OR b) if Taiwan leaders and the public lost their self-confidence and the US willingness to help Taiwan defend itself declined.*
- *I am VERY pessimistic because I see only hawks within all three actors. No doves or moderate voices are around. None! And Xi's "rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" and Tsai's "special state-to-state relationship" cannot possibly coexist - not for long anyway. So, a clash is inevitable. Only one of them will go down in history as a "great man (or lady)," the other being a "sinner." The US is the only country that can possibly help with the situation. Biden is much better than Trump in navigating the treacherous waters. How he will manage, I don't know.*
- *There can be no mutually satisfactory solution at present because the PRC's demands for unification appear to be inimical to a fair, prosperous, and peaceful international and regional order. The United States and Taiwan simply cannot accept Beijing's terms. That said, I would point out that a high degree of peace has existed since the 1958 crisis. Should Xi's demands and aggression diminish for any reason, I would expect this state of affairs to resume. Thus, I would say it is resolution of the dispute that is elusive, not "long-lasting peace."*
- *Avoid crossing the red lines of the other side: no unilateral changes of the status quo and no use of force. Someday, a significantly politically evolved China, or a fatally weakened US may bring about a consensus, but that may be a long time away. The US and China are becoming more equal in power, and Taiwan is not keeping up either militarily or diplomatically. So, Taiwan may be losing influence in its future. Catching up militarily is not likely, so better cross-strait diplomacy is likely to be its main instrument to preserve its autonomy.*
- *A long-lasting peace could emerge if neither Beijing nor Washington fears the malicious use of Taiwan to rival each other. This would require a neutral Taiwan.*

Taiwan could begin to attain minimal confidence and credits with both sides as a neutral by first refusing to support a US invasion elsewhere. This would enable Washington's support for Taiwan to permanently delay reunification with Beijing with clear support. Beijing would not worry that Washington's support for Taiwan arises from a military incentive.

- *"As presently constructed politically, no. China's communist system is anathema to Taiwan's democracy. For the foreseeable future every effort must be made to deter China from active military aggression. Buying time.*
- *(1) Beijing is the prisoner of a dead man's formula (Deng XP). "One country Two systems" formula is dead on arrival. Beijing needs to come up with a better and *credible* offer than what they have held out to Taipei. (2) Having secured its democratic system, it is difficult to envision the people of Taiwan deciding to put themselves under the jurisdiction of the PRC as long as the CCP rules. (3) I worry that the prospects for miscalculation in all three capitals is increasing.*
- *I don't see China will give up the goal of unification in the near future. The current relationship (ambiguity to all) is not the most satisfactory to all parts but acceptable temporarily. The future of the relationship will be determined mostly by the US-China relations. In general, China is the major source of instability in the relationship.*
- *To accommodate Taiwan's needs. A broader commonwealth or union under "One China" with two entities. A few scholars in China may even accept Taiwanese de jure independence. Hawks in China are in control now but there are quite a few liberals so there are various views around in reality.*
- *Giving up putting pressure on Taiwan, allowing Hong Kong to have real autonomy, as well as Tibet and Xinjiang. Stop the United Front activities designed to bend other countries' policies toward Beijing. End "wolf warrior" diplomacy.*
- *It's all about time. If China becomes politically pluralistic, a solution acceptable to all might be found. It needs to be managed by experienced professionals. Not cowboys.*
- *Anyone who wants to take his benefit depends on his ability and the price he will pay once the price is higher than the benefit he will get, then he won't take any actions.*
- *Cross-strait relationship is a subset of the U.S.-China relationship. So, the determining factor has always been the ongoing relations between the U.S. and China.*

- *US-Taiwan versus China. No triangle. It was triangular. It is mostly just US-Taiwan versus China starting from the Trump administration.*
- *If China maintains on its current trajectory, long-lasting peace will remain elusive. The status quo is unsustainable in the long-term.*
- *Well, it depends on the time frame you chose to scrutinize this issue, right?*
- *seems no; no easy answer to the latter*
- *I doubt it.*
- *“As long as the CCP insists on unification, conflict will continue. Long-lasting peace will remain elusive as long as the CCP lays claim over Taiwan and refuses to acknowledge its right to self-determination. Enlightened leadership in Beijing, which recognizes how history has shaped the two countries destinies and explains to the Chinese public that China's greatness and security are not predicated on annexing Taiwan, would help reduce the ultranationalism that, for the time being, makes de-escalation nearly impossible.”*

Appendix II: Abbreviations

AIT	American Institute in Taiwan (https://www.ait.org.tw/) (The U.S.'s de facto embassy to Taiwan)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party (http://cpc.people.com.cn/)
CSIS	Center of Strategic and International Studies (https://www.csis.org/) (A Washington based think tank)
CSPA	Cross Strait Policy Association (A Taiwanese non-governmental organization)
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DDP	Democratic Progressive Party (https://www.dpp.org.tw/) (A political party in Taiwan)
ESC	Election Study Center, National Chengchi University
GTI	Global Taiwan Institute (http://globaltaiwan.org/) (A Washington based think tank)
KMT	Kuomintang or Nationalist Party of China (http://www.kmt.org.tw/) (A political party in Taiwan)
MAC	Mainland Affairs Council (Taiwanese Government agency dealing with China)
NCCU	National Chengchi University (https://www.nccu.edu.tw/)
NPC	National People's Congress (The Chinese legislative body)
NTU	National Taiwan University (https://www.ntu.edu.tw/english/)
PLA	People's Liberation Army (The Chinese Army)
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China
TAO	Taiwan Affairs Office (Chinese Government agency dealing with Taiwan)
TRA	Taiwan Relations Act (https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479)
TERCO	Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States (https://www.taiwanembassy.org/us_en/index.html) (Taiwan's de facto embassy to the U.S.)
UNLV	University of Nevada, Las Vegas (https://www.unlv.edu/)
UC	University of California
UVA	University of Virginia (https://www.virginia.edu/)

Appendix III

Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China (Commonly known as the Shanghai Communiqué) , Shanghai, February 27, 1972. (Selected Sections)

...The two sides reviewed the long-standing serious disputes between China and the United States. The Chinese side reaffirmed its position: The Taiwan question is the crucial question obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States; the Government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government of China; Taiwan is a province of China which has long been returned to the motherland; the liberation of Taiwan is China's internal affair in which no other country has the right to interfere; and all U.S. forces and military installations must be withdrawn from Taiwan. The Chinese Government firmly opposes any activities which aim at the creation of "one China, one Taiwan," "one China, two governments," "two Chinas," and "independent Taiwan" or advocate that "the status of Taiwan remains to be determined."

The U.S. side declared: The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes...

Appendix IV
Taiwan Relations Act, January 1, 1979 (Selected Sections)

TAIWAN RELATIONS ACT, PUBLIC LAW 96-8 96TH CONGRESS

An Act

To help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people of Taiwan, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Short Title

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the “Taiwan Relations Act”.

Findings and Declaration of Policy

Section. 2.

1. The President- having terminated governmental relations between the United States and the governing authorities on Taiwan recognized by the United States as the Republic of China prior to January 1, 1979, the Congress finds that the enactment of this Act is necessary—
 1. to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific; and
 2. to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan.
2. It is the policy of the United States—
 1. to preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, as well as the people on the China mainland and all other peoples of the Western Pacific area;
 2. to declare that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern;

3. to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means;
 4. to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States;
 5. to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and
 6. to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.
3. Nothing contained in this Act shall contravene the interest of the United States in human rights, especially with respect to the human rights of all the approximately eighteen million inhabitants of Taiwan. The preservation and enhancement of the human rights of all the people on Taiwan are hereby reaffirmed as objectives of the United States.

Implementation of United States Policy with Regard to Taiwan

Section. 3.

1. In furtherance of the policy set forth in section 2 of this Act, the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.
2. The President and the Congress shall determine the nature and quantity of such defense articles and services based solely upon their judgment of the needs of Taiwan, in accordance with procedures established by law. Such determination of Taiwan's defense needs shall include review by United States military authorities in connection with recommendations to the President and the Congress.
3. The President is directed to inform the Congress promptly of any threat to the security or the social or economic system of the people on Taiwan and any danger to the interests of the United States arising therefrom. The President and the Congress shall determine, in accordance with constitutional processes, appropriate action by the United States in response to any such danger.

Appendix V

Working Together to Realize Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation and Advance China's Peaceful Reunification, Speech at the Meeting Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Issuance of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, January 2, 2019, Xi Jinping

Comrades, my compatriots, and friends,

Today, we are meeting here to solemnly commemorate the 40th anniversary of the issuance of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. As a new year begins, on behalf of the people on the mainland, I extend sincere greetings and best wishes to our compatriots in Taiwan.

It has been 70 years since Taiwan and the mainland were separated. The emergence and evolution of the Taiwan question has, since China entered the modern times, been inextricably interwoven with the history of the Chinese nation. The Opium War of 1840 and ensuing wars of aggression launched by Western powers plunged China into an anguished state of turmoil and foreign threat, with its lands torn apart, and Taiwan fell under foreign occupation that was to last half a century. Wave upon wave, the Chinese people were engaged in an epic struggle to resist foreign invasion, liberate the Chinese nation, and realize the country's reunification. Our compatriots in Taiwan made a huge contribution to this struggle. In 1945, together with peoples around the world, the Chinese people won victory in the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, a part of the global War against Fascism. Taiwan was thus recovered and returned to China. It was not long, however, before the two sides of the Taiwan Straits fell into a special state of protracted political confrontation due to the civil war in China and the interference of foreign forces.

Since 1949, the Communist Party of China, the Chinese government, and the Chinese people have endeavored to pursue the historic mission of resolving the Taiwan question and realizing China's complete reunification. Working with our compatriots in Taiwan, we have de-escalated tense confrontation across the Taiwan Straits, improved cross-Straits relations, and set out on a path of peaceful development and continually made breakthroughs in cross-Straits relations.

Over the past 70 years, we have, responding to the longing of people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits, ended the absence of contact between the two sides. We have achieved overall direct two-way "three links" (mail, business and transport) and have initiated substantial exchanges, communication, and cooperation between the two sides. Cross-Straits exchanges and cooperation have steadily expanded and grown increasingly closer, and mutual affinity has deepened. Our compatriots in Taiwan have made a major contribution to the mainland's reform and opening up and they in turn have also shared the mainland's development opportunities.

Over the past 70 years, we have, acting in a spirit of seeking common ground while setting aside differences and on the basis of the one-China principle, enabled the two sides to reach the "1992

Consensus” that “both sides of the Taiwan Straits belong to one China and will work together toward national reunification.” The two sides have thus initiated consultations and negotiation and promoted cross-Straits party-to-party exchanges. We have opened up a path for promoting the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and realized a historic meeting between leaders of both sides, thus elevating cross-Straits political interactions to a new height.

Over the past 70 years, we have, keeping in mind the changes over time in the growth of cross-Straits relations, proposed the policy of seeking a peaceful solution to the Taiwan question and the well-conceived concept of “one country, two systems”, and established the fundamental guideline of “peaceful reunification and one country, two systems”. On this basis, we have formulated a fundamental strategy of upholding the principle of “one country, two systems” and promoting national reunification. With this we have responded to the call of our time, namely, to promote, in the new era, the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and unite our compatriots in Taiwan to strive for our country’s rejuvenation and peaceful reunification.

Over the past 70 years, we have, holding high the banner of peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, and on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, forged friendship and strengthened cooperation with other countries and consolidated the international community’s commitment to the one-China principle. More and more countries and people have gained a better understanding of National reunification endeavor and given their support to it.

Over the past 70 years, we have, bearing in mind the overall and long-term interests of the Chinese nation, stood firm in safeguarding China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Rallying all the Chinese people around us, we have resolutely defeated all attempts to create “two Chinas,” “one China, one Taiwan,” or “Taiwan independence,” and have achieved major victories in the fight against the separatist activities for “Taiwan independence”.

As the evolution of cross-Straits relations attests, the historical and legal fact that Taiwan is part of China and the two sides belong to one and same China can never be changed by any force or anyone. We people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits are Chinese and share a natural affinity and national identity built of kinship and mutual assistance, a fact that can never be altered by any force or anyone. The tide of our times — the cross-Straits situation moving toward peace and stability and cross-Straits relations continuing to move forward — is a tide that cannot be stopped by any force or anyone. The historical trend toward a stronger China, national rejuvenation, and reunification cannot be stopped by any force or anyone!

Appendix VI

President Tsai issues statement on China's President Xi's "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan" January 2, 2019

My fellow citizens and friends from the media, good afternoon.

This morning, China's President Xi Jinping delivered a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of the so-called "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan," proposing further exploration of a "one country, two systems" scenario for Taiwan. As president of the Republic of China, I want to explain our position.

First, I must emphasize that we have never accepted the "1992 Consensus." The fundamental reason is because the Beijing authorities' definition of the "1992 Consensus" is "one China" and "one country, two systems." The speech delivered by China's leader today has confirmed our misgivings. Here, I want to reiterate that Taiwan absolutely will not accept "one country, two systems." The vast majority of Taiwanese also resolutely oppose "one country, two systems," and this opposition is also a "Taiwan consensus."

Next, we are willing to engage in negotiations. But as Taiwan is a democratic country, all political consultations and negotiations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait must be authorized and monitored by the people of Taiwan, and conducted on a government-to-government basis by both sides. Under this principle, no individual or group has the right to represent the people of Taiwan to conduct political consultations or negotiations.

The development of cross-strait relations, as I said very clearly in my new year's talk yesterday, requires that: China must face the reality of the existence of the Republic of China (Taiwan), and not deny the democratic system that the people of Taiwan have established together; second, must respect the commitment of the 23 million people of Taiwan to freedom and democracy, and not foster divisions and offer inducements to interfere with the choices made by the people of Taiwan; third, must handle cross-strait differences peacefully, on the basis of equality, instead of using suppression and intimidation to get Taiwanese to submit; fourth, it must be governments or government-authorized agencies that engage in negotiations. Any political consultations that are not authorized and monitored by the people cannot be called "democratic consultations." This is Taiwan's position, a democratic position.

We are willing, on the basis of "consolidating democracy" and "strengthening national security," to conduct orderly, healthy cross-strait exchanges. I also want to reiterate that domestically, we need to set up a three-part security network for cross-strait exchanges comprised of security for people's livelihoods, information security, and an institutionalized democracy monitoring mechanism.

Cross-strait trade and economic relations should be mutually beneficial, and promote mutual prosperity and development. However, we oppose Beijing making "benefitting China" its core focus, using United Front economic means including financial inducements to attract Taiwan technology, capital, and talent to move to mainland China. We will vigorously promote strategies and measures that strengthen Taiwan to consolidate a Taiwan-centric, Taiwan-first path to economic development.

Over the past two years, Taiwan has faithfully fulfilled its duty as a member of the regional community, actively contributing to cross-strait and regional peace and stability. We do not provoke, but uphold our principles. We have suffered many forms of suppression, but have never abandoned our fundamental position and commitments regarding cross-strait relations. I want to remind the Beijing authorities that a superpower must act with the demeanor and take the responsibility of a superpower, and international society is watching China to see if it can make changes and become a trustworthy partner. The "four musts" are the most basic and crucial foundations that will determine whether cross-strait relations develop in a positive direction.

A so-called "spiritual union" should be built on mutual respect and understanding, with governments on both sides of the strait handling issues regarding the people's welfare pragmatically, such as the urgent swine fever epidemic we are now facing. Pressuring international corporations to change their designation for Taiwan won't bring about a spiritual union, nor will buying off Taiwan's diplomatic allies or circling Taiwan with military aircraft and naval vessels.

Lastly, I want to reiterate that the results of the 9-in-1 elections absolutely do not mean that grassroots public opinion in Taiwan favors abandoning our sovereignty, nor do they mean that the people want to make concessions regarding Taiwanese identity.

Democratic values are the values and way of life that Taiwanese cherish, and we call upon China to bravely move towards democracy. This is the only way they can truly understand Taiwanese people's ideas and commitments. Thank you.

"If you wish for peace, understand war."

B.H. Liddell Hart

"Pasola xmnx na mansonsou!"

(May every time you breathe, you breathe smoothly)

Joint Declaration by the Representatives of the Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan within the
Indigenous Historical Justice and Transitional Justice Committee